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CHRISTMAS.

BY SUSANNA J

Dear Christmas, for thine honored brow
We bring Love's brightest coronet.
Our hopes, our joys, thrice hallowed now,
Our griefs, with recent tear-drops wet,
And all Life's clouds and cares beside
Are by their presence glorified.

With joy we sing thy happy reign,
With heartfelt mirth thy coming greet.
Oh, welcome to our homes again,
Dispersing with thy sunshine sweet
The gath'ring gloom, the tempest drear,
And all the sorrows of the year!

Thy beaming smile hath charms enough
To tinge all things with fairer light,
To smooth awhile our pathways rough,
To shine through Winter's longest night,
And bring through all Earth's noise and strife
Sweet tidings of the better Life.

To wake those hearts to life again
The world hath chilled or frozen o'er;
To reunite Love's severed chain,
And make old Friendship glow once more;
Each soul's best impulses to wake
To charity for thy dear sake.

These are thy gifts, all-potent king,
And these the blessings of thy sway
So bells may peal and carols ring
And hearts rejoice on Christmas Day,
Nor shall the angel-music cease
From Heav'n to Earth—"Goodwill and peace."

TIFF.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A GREAT MISTAKE," "ROSE OF THE WORLD," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

"YOU did not expect to find me in London?" said Ninon. "You see I have no strength of mind."

"How is Tiffany?" asked Dick gravely; and Ninon bit her lip.

"Tiffany is very well," she said. "She is going to the High Chool at Marybridge. It was for that"—her voice sank and she looked at him beseechingly—"that I consented to come to town with Katherine. Dick, don't you believe me?"

"Why should I doubt you?" he asked quietly.

"I am sorry you have not found time to go and see my mother and Mary. They have not forgotten you. They are longing to have you with them again."

"I told you I should never go again," declared the girl with a bitter little laugh. "I can keep my word you see, sometimes."

And then Ernest Savage, the society poet came up, and little Sir Robert Davenant, who was as devoted as he had been a year before; and Dick was left to Lady Ingram's tender mercies.

But, in spite of her bitter little declaration, Miss Masserene did find her way again to the cottage at Barnes, and was received with unchanged sweetness by the two women there.

Ninon however felt uneasy in aunt Dorothy's presence, though the anxious mother did her best to hide the gloom that had fallen upon her life and that of the girl who loved her son with such an unselfish love.

"You must not let Dick come too often to Dover Street, aunt Dorothy," she said, with a little laugh and a blush.

"I think he is out of place among all the empty-headed young men of fashion that Katherine likes to have about us."

"I quite agree with you," said Dick, coloring too.

"But, you see, my mother and Mary let me do what I like, and perhaps I shall pick up a little philosophy in Dover street that may stand me in good stead one of these days."

Mary did not say a word, and Ninon began to chatter the most insufferable small-talk, interspersing it with all manner of fashionable names and fashionable jargon, while Mrs. Strong listened sadly enough.

"Tiffany is not with you?" the mother asked gently, in the first available pause. "She must miss you greatly."

"Now, aunt Dorothy," said Ninon, flushing, "I know what you mean And I know what I ought to do. But I am tired of doing what I ought; one gains nothing by it. Henceforth I am going to do what I like."

* * * * * *

"What is the matter with Mary?" Ninon demanded abruptly the next time she met Dick in Dover Street.

"Why does she look so altered? I can't bear to see her!"

"Do you think she is altered?" Dick asked carelessly.

"She seems to me just the same sweet and cheerful little women as ever."

Ninon shrugged her shoulders irritably.

"How has poor little Mistress Mary contrived to offend your royal highness?" asked the young man, with a somewhat bitter smile.

"I should have thought that such an insignificant little person might have escaped unscathed from those two light-flashes that I see in your eyes,"

"Insignificant!" echoed the girl scornfully.

"I mean, of course, compared with the beautiful Miss Masserene, whose lot will lie in a so much higher place than here."

"And who has been known," retorted Ninon, drawing up her white throat, "to wield a broom to patch her gowns in the flat, when Lady Ingram found her in the Street of the Four Eggs at Avranches."

"Ninon!"

"You do well to remind me of the difference between my lot and Mary's," the girl went on tremulously; "but she knows, if you do not, how much I am to be pitied."

Dick looked at her with haggard eyes.

"I thought you hated to be pitied?" he said abruptly.

"You always used to tell me that you were to be envied."

The girl broke into an hysterical laugh.

"And am I?" she asked. "It it only from Mary I will take pity. See how proud I ought to be! I have brought division and unhappiness into the home of the only people in the world who have been good to me. Oh, yes, I know about Katherine!

"But she does not make any pretence of being unselfish. I have spoiled your life for you——"

"No, my dear—no."

"But I say yes! Do you think I am made of wood—that I can bear to see that girl's face looking as it did the other day? Do you think I can bear to know that you have such good cause to hate the sound of my name, and that I am not afraid to look aunt Dorothy in the eyes, remembering what she was to me, and how I have returned it? Dick"—she broke into a sudden passion of weeping—"oh, Dick, is there no way out of all this misery? Why won't you be reasonable and go away and forget me? Why won't you make Mary and your mother happy?"

The young man stood and watched her sobbing for a few seconds in silence; then he said, in a constrained voice—

"Have we any right to discuss Mary's most sacred feelings in this manner? What good can come of this, Ninon?"

She only sobbed on, laying her head in utter abandonment on the table by which she sat.

"I ask nothing of you," Dick went on; "you know that. If I am so weak-minded as to come here day after day, who knows but that I have a motive for doing so?"

She lifted herself up, and looked at him out of her tear-stained eyes.

"Yes," he said quietly, but with a bitter smile.

"Perhaps I have undertaken to cure myself of my madness.

"I am not one of those men who can go on loving when they have ceased to esteem. I think that even my folly will hardly stand the test much longer of looking on at the life Ninon Masserene leads, and knowing that for it she has broken her good resolutions, disappointed those who thought most highly of her, forsaken the little sister who depends upon her for her happiness."

Ninon stood up and faced him, as white as death, her head thrown back, her large white eye-lids downcast.

"Have you quite finished insulting me?" she said in an icy voice.

"I have said my say," Dick answered sadly.

"Let me come and look on at the comedy without fear, though I no longer have a part in it. When I go away, Ninon, it will be never to see you again. And all I ask of you is not to speak to me any more of Mary Hawthorn. A man does not like to be reminded of his irretrievable errors and mistakes in life."

Ninon bowed, as with her eyes haughtily cast down.

"Since there is no acting going on at present," she said, "perhaps you will leave me to myself.

"You do not deserve that I should tell you that I am going back to Marybridge. You think that I told you as much before, and that I did not keep my word? Perhaps so; but"—her voice trembled—"you need not have reminded me of it, Dick! Have I ever pretended to be better than I am? Are you not becoming convinced at last how little good there is in me? When you go away, never to see me again, you will look back with a contemptuous smile to the days we spent together, to our first talk on the ramparts at Mont St. Michael, when we sat together under the fig-tree in the moonlight and you promised to be kind to me always, because I had no mother——"

"Ninon!"

Dick Strong went a pace or two nearer to the beautiful trembling form.

"To the evening in the Garden of l'Eveche at Avranches, where you listened so patiently to all my troubles, and dried my eyes with your handkerchief—to——"

"Stop!" the young man cried hoarsely. "What needless cruelty is that?"

"It is you who are cruel," whispered Ninon, looking up now, and letting the great tears that had gathered on her lashes roll down her cheeks.

"You have forgotten everything except my faults—and I will remember those dear old days as long as I live—long after you are married to Mary, and——"

"That is enough!" cried Dick abruptly. "You have taught me now, beyond all doubt, that I must never come any more. You have men enough to befool, Ninon. I will add to their number no longer."

And for a week, as has been told, he kept his word, and was seen no more in Dover Street.

At no time could Ninon bear to see her adorers assert themselves and break away from their bondage.

It was her place to dismiss them, and, until she chose to do so, their duty was to submit uncomplainingly to all her charming caprices, to endure in silence the pangs of jealousy and longing and despair—which they were for the most part willing to do rather than find themselves banished into outer darkness, leaving their rivals, to bask in the light and the warmth of the young beauty's smiles.

And now that Dick Strong, of all others, should openly rebel, should take upon himself to call her to task, to speak such disagreeable plain truths, should avow his determination never to see her again!

Ninon was conscious that this was immeasurably the best thing that could happen, both for Dick and for herself.

She knew that on his carrying out that determination depended the poor fellow's best chance of future contentment, his only chance of redeeming the past errors of which he had spoken so bitterly, and of restoring peace and tranquility to the home cross which her own blighting shadow had fallen for a time.

She knew all this, and should have rejoiced at the turn events had taken; but, with her usual perverse and inscrutable capacity for self-torment, the girl felt, during the week of poor Dick's absence, that all her other triumphs hardly consoled her for that one deep humiliation, that she could not rest content until she had called her cousin back to her feet, and had succeeded in inducing him to unsay those hard and ugly words which still rang in her ears and made themselves heard so persistently above all the compliments and passionate whispers of her little court of admirers.

If he would only speak to her kindly again, if he would only submit himself once more to her charms, to her influence, Ninon thought restlessly, she would ask for nothing else.

After that she would let him go.

She would tell him that she had no hope to give him, that Mary Hawthorn would make him far, far happier than his poor little cousin could ever aspire to do; but—he must come back to her before he went away for good.

She did not want to be haunted by his reproachful face, stung by his bitter words, when he was gone.

Let them only part friends, and it was all she would ask.

That was not much.

They were cousins.

She had a right to expect affection from him at least.

She would not submit to be despised by him.

Miss Masserene wrote one or two little notes to poor Dick, which remained unanswered.

She looked for him in vain in the park, at church, at the Opera, where the young man had been wont to haunt her footsteps and to gaze on her loveliness from afar.

And at last, some evil chance having led poor restless Dick to the Duchess's Theatre, she succeeded, as has been related, in speaking to him again, in making him promise to come to Dover Street once more, if only to say good-bye.

She had broken down the barrier of his pride, of his better resolutions; he had returned to his allegiance, and now, the girl felt, it was for her to dismiss him as gently as she could, having first secured his forgiveness for the past and taken from him even the faintest hope in the future.

Lady Ingram's calm prediction was the only bitter drop in her cup.

It would be necessary of course to prevent Dick from renewing the wild confession he had made in the moonlight at Dinard a year before.

She could not bear to see any one suffer. It was true that Katherine, speaking out of her wider experience, had assured her that men very soon got over those little troubles; but Ninon could not bear to think of the poor fellow's face as it had looked that night, she could not bear to think that he might look at her so again before they parted friends.

* * * * * * * *

Lady Ingram's little suppers after the theatres were admitted to be very agreeable.

Only a few people were invited, and there were always more men than women.

To-night, besides Sir Robert Davenant and Richard Strong, there was Ernest Savage, the society poet, an especial adorer of

Miss Masserene's and a Frenchman who sang romances in a delicious barytone.

Charles St. Leonards would come in later; he was going for an hour to the Duchess of Easminster's ball.

"And so you are going to leave us?" murmured the poet plaintively into Ninon's ear, as they sat a little apart at an open window.

"The season is over," answered the girl smiling.

"What does Matthew Arnold's cuckoo say, Mr. Savage?

" 'The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I.' "

"Yes; you hold the summer in your fair and cruel little hands; and you go taking it with you, without a tear, without a pang."

"Oh, not without a pang!"—wistfully. "If you did but know!"

The poet shook back his long hair and put himself on the floor at the girl's feet, leaning on his elbow and gazing upward at her.

"I asked nothing of life," he urged, aggrieved, "but to lie thus and pelt your beautiful face with roses; and now you are going to rob me of the one joy left me in this world."

Ninon met his uplifted and sentimental eyes with a slow sweet look.

"Perhaps," she answered in a low voice—"perhaps I am afraid of the thorns. You know that

" 'No thorn goes so deep as a rose's.' "

The young Frenchman was singing a song of Massenet's to Lady Ingram, while she smoked her Russian cigarette.

Poor Sir Robert, leaning sulkily against the piano, his hands thrust into his pockets, was jealously watching the sentimental encounter between Miss Masserene and her long-haired poet; and Ninon was perfectly aware that she was being watched.

The conviction kept her from feeling as thoroughly unhappy as she would otherwise have felt.

For Dick too, who had withdrawn into the shadow of one of the trailing curtains, was noting with haggard wretched eyes what was going on at the open window, beyond which spread the star-strewn summer sky. Odours of mignonnette and heliotrope blew softly into the dimly-lit room, whose pink wax candles were shaded by little screens of Barbotine faience.

The pleading music of the pretty French romance rose and fell, blending with the whispered duel between Ninon and her worshipper.

Dick saw the slow sweet look, the wistful smile with which the girl spoke.

Were they not the same as she had granted to him an hour before?

They had meant no more for him than for that other man, he told himself, with renewed bitterness.

She held his very heart and soul no dearer and no higher than she held the empty adoration of those fashionable idiots—so, in his jealous agony, did poor Dick designate Mr. Ernest Savage and little Sir Robert Davenant.

And for a moment he had believed otherwise!

Intoxicated by a few soft words, a few bars of an old waltz played on a street-organ, he had been fool enough to believe others, when already Ninon had well-nigh forgotten his existence, to remember him perhaps, later, in some idle hour, as a poor foolish fellow who had lain down before her and let her put her cruel little foot upon his heart.

But Ninon was by no means unconscious of her cousin's presence.

She went on laughing and talking indeed because, while she was thus engaged, she felt a little less the urgent unceasing pain at her heart which the reproach she read in his haggard eyes awoke with her.

If only, she was hurriedly thinking in the pauses of her conversation with Ernest Savage, she could have deadened that pain altogether!

If only she had the power of putting painful thoughts away from her, of defying them, of being happy in spite of what other people thought of her!

She kept Ernest Savage kneeling before her and shaking back his ambrosial locks until she saw Charles St. Leonards come in and make straight across the room from Lady Ingram to her side.

If Miss Masserene liked to have a poet kneeling at her feet, she liked still better to order him royally away before everybody, that she might be free to smile upon another man.

"Did I play well to-night?" St. Leonards asked in a low voice as he bent his plain well-bred head over the girl's extended hand.

"I am hungry for a word from you. I played to you only. Say that I played well!"

"You frightened me!" answered Ninon, looking up with beautiful parted lips, and the same air of half-started, half-absorbed attention as she had worn in the beautiful theatre.

"And you made me cry when you said good-bye to Lady Blanche. I don't like to cry in a theatre, Mr. St. Leonards, and"—with a little air of bewildered protest—"no man has ever frightened me before."

"Are you sure that it was I who frightened you?" murmured the actor. "Was it not rather Captain Daryl?"

Ninon was still looking up into his eyes, sitting with clasped hands, and regarding him like a child fascinated by some stronger will.

"There was no Captain Daryl there," she said dreamily. Charles St. Leonards bent still lower over her exquisite dark head.

"Only you and I!" he answered in his musical voice. "Miss Masserene, do you think I care for any other word from you after that?"

The girl started and let her blue eyes fall.

"No, no!" pleaded St. Leonards passionately.

"Do not punish me so cruelly for my audacity.

"Look up again, if only to prove that you forgive me."

And, timidly, she did raise her eyes again, and met his deep look with another gaze full of a sweet vague trouble.

She felt no such trouble as was expressed in her face and voice.

She was merely acting up to him, and she was the better artist of the two, if clever Charles St. Leonards had only known it.

From the distant sofa, wherein he had thrown himself at full length, Ernest Savage was regarding his successor with scowls.

Sir Robert, for his part, could stand it no longer; he started up and went abruptly out on to the balcony, where he sat down on a yellow china tub under the awning, and stared at the opposite houses, feeling a very wretched and desperate little man indeed.

It was a situation that amused Ninon to the top of her bent.

For a few moments, as she played her adorers one against the other, she was almost happy—almost.

Dick was still there, leaning immovably against the folding-door, and, though apparently listening with polite attention to the music, was, as she knew, watching her remorselessly through the mazes of her triple flirtation.

She must say a last word to him, she was thinking, while Charles St. Leonards was pleading in a whisper for one of the white roses she had worn all the evening—a word that would render it impossible for him to come back to-morrow, as Katherine had predicted he would do, but which would rid her at the same time of that perpetual little ache that hung about her heart.

It would never do to take that pain down to Marybridge with her.

Her life there was dreary enough already in all conscience!

And ever after she would take care to run no more risk of shooting robins, but would devote her skill to more legitimate game.

If only he would not stand apart, the girl thought restlessly, and look so white and set!

And, as she was thinking this, she yielded at last to St. Leonards' prayer, and let him take from her hand the half-withered rose she held.

As she did so, Dick started and came forward abruptly to take leave of Lady Ingram.

It was too bad, Ninon considered, that he should appear so vexed, so upset, by that little bit of harmless nonsense which meant—oh, less than nothing!

He must not go away believing her to be heartless.

He must, he should smile at her once again before they said good-bye.

In another moment he was standing before her and holding out his hand.

There was no reproach now in his unhappy young face, only a great deal of kindness and of strongly-repressed pain.

The girl's conscience smote her more sharply than ever as she looked at him.

She sprang up from her chair and put her slender hand within his arm.

"We have not had our good-bye talk after all," she said gently. "And now you are going away."

St. Leonards took the hint and went to Lady Ingram.

"My dear boy," Ninon began coaxingly, "do you know that your face is like a death's head at a feast? For Heaven's sake smile and talk like everybody else.

"I can't bear to see you looking so miserable."

"But you see I don't pretend to be anything but miserable," answered Dick, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

"You are going away to-morrow. I myself too am off soon. Who knows when I shall see you again?"

"I thought you said it was to be good-bye for ever," whispered Ninon, looking up with her sweet and fatal blue eyes.

"And it will be, if I was wise," responded the young fellow, trying to smile. "By that time you will be Lady Davenant, no doubt."

"Dick," cried the girl with an hysterical laugh, "no calling of names, if you please, sir!"

Why had she ever met this poor boy, she was thinking, or why had he chosen to take so desperately to heart the little cousinly flirtation into which they had been led by circumstances?

He was poor, and had always felt himself at a disadvantage with the other men who surrounded her, and she—she had felt sorry for him, and had meant just to be kind and make him feel less uncomfortable.

Was it her fault, after all, if he had been stupid enough, poor fellow, to think too much of a chance word or smile?

"How hot it is in here!" she cried impatiently, and coloring a little under her cousin's sad steady gaze. "I wonder if it is any cooler in the conservatory? Let us go and try."

Before her assembled adorers Miss Masserene crossed the room with Dick Strong.

Lady Ingram lifted her eyebrows as they passed her, and was answered with a wilful shrug of the shoulders from the beauty.

The conservatory looked inviting with its ebonised basket-chairs and Persian rugs and dimly-glowing lamps.

The flowers smelt sweet in the half-lit gloom.

Ninon stood among them in her long white gown, wondering what she should say to the grim dark young form that towered above her.

"There is a dear little bud for you," she began at last, turning to him with her charming melancholy smile.

"Let me fasten it in your coat. It is a token that we part friends, is it not? Dear old Dick!

"You did not mean all the unkind things you said to me the other day? You would not go away leaving me so unhappy as to believe that you did—would you?"

Poor Dick sighed.

"We are friends, aren't we?" urged the girl gently.

She laid a timid hand upon his arm, and Dick covered it with his large sunburnt palm.

"Yes," he said; "if you like to call it so, dear.

"A poor beggar like me ought to be grateful for even so much, and not allow himself to ask for any more."

"Oh, please, please Dick, don't talk about being grateful.

"Surely there need be no such word spoken between us two, who are almost like—like brother and sister!"

The sweet pitiful face was uplifted to his.

The great dazzling blue eyes to which sonnets had already been written and songs sung were looking imploring into his own.

Poor Dick could only sigh again.

"You will forget all this folly, won't you?"

She went on, rushing headlong, in spite of herself, in spite even of previously-formed resolutions, to her fate,

"You will have sense, Dick, and forget me?"

"Forget you!" the young man echoed with bitter sadness.

"You know that you are not a woman to be forgotten, Ninon, by a man who has once loved you.

"Did not you remind me yourself the other day of all that old happy time we spent together, and now you ask me to forget it—to forget the day I met you at the Mount, and our journey next day, and our walks in the quiet Avranches gardens while the band played and the limes rustled? So you think I can't see the pretty old alleys now, and the bench where we sat that evening, when you told me the story of your life and let me hold your pretty hand, my dear?

"And then you tell me to forget!"

"Yes, yes, forget it all!"

Ninon broke in hurriedly, as pale as death.

"Dick, be reasonable, tell me that you will be reasonable, that you forgive me for having made you care for me so much! Indeed, indeed I did not mean to do so. I only wanted to be a little good to you; and now——"

"And you have been very good to me, dear," the young man made answer loyally. He had somewhat recovered himself. "I should be a brute to blame you. I have nothing to forgive. You cannot help being the loveliest and sweetest girl I have ever known.

"Ah, Ninon, you will make a great match no doubt, one of these days, but no one will ever love you better than your poor stupid old Dick, at whom you have laughed a hundred times."

He put out his hand.

"Let us say good-bye now," he added abruptly. "I shall go away by that other door. I cannot face all those other men again."

The hand he held out trembled, though the poor fellow smiled.

Ninon saw it; and she could not help noticing how brown and rough it was, compared with the soft hands of those other men.

The girl felt nervously that she would have given worlds if his hands had not trembled, and if it had been white and prosperous-looking like Sir Robert's.

It would have been so much easier then to send him away.

Oh, why was he so sad and so poor?

Why could not every one be rich and happy?

Why need there be any inflicting or bearing of pain in the world, so that one's enjoyment was being perpetually poisoned by that intolerable undertone of remorse?

All the evening, for the sake of a few idle compliments that half wearied her, she had been stabbing and paining that tender heart which was so entirely hers—the thought wrung her own heart now.

How was she to let him go and to be tormented by the thought of his patient face whenever the wind blew the chimney-pots or up in the trees at home, while he was on the sea, thinking of her, fretting for her?

"Dick," she said imploringly, raising the sweet troubled face to his—"dear old Dick, say good-bye to me now at once, lest I should not have the courage to let you go!"

And then, in a moment more, she felt herself seized in his arms and heard him—all his good resolutions melting before her glance—stammering out some mad words of confession, of entreaty.

Ninon shivered as she heard him.

A girl does not come in contact with a man's madness for the first time unmoved, though she may be a born coquette and able to parry a compliment and return it with a jest.

"Oh, Dick, don't!" she said faintly, putting her two weak little hands against his great shoulders and trying to draw back from him.

But Dick Strong held her close.

"I must know what you mean by those words!" he panted out hurriedly.

"Ninon, can it be possible, after all, that you care for me—that you have had pity on me——"

"Oh, let me go!" pleaded the girl hopelessly.

"Oh, don't Dick!"

"I did not mean to speak, Heaven knows!" urged poor Dick, in a hoarse whisper.

"I have no right to speak. But now that the words are said I cannot go without my answer, dear.

"If all a man's inmost heart and soul could make you happy, mine are at your feet. I can't talk like those poets and actor-fellows.

"My life is in your hands, that is all, if you choose to take it. If you don't, I care very little what becomes of me, Ninon! Don't keep me in suspense. Send me away quickly if I am to go."

She looked up, sighing.

Her eyes were full of tears.

"You ought to go," she said, with a tremulous smile—"only——"

"Only?"

His arms were close about her, his ardent eyes looking into hers.

"Only—I cannot send you away!"

"Ninon—my wife!"

Dick would have pressed his lips to the sweet and coveted ones so near his own, but a step was heard, and the newly-betrothed lovers started guiltily asunder.

Sir Robert Davenant was coming towards them through the palm-leaves and colored lights of the conservatory.

"Lady Ingram sent me," he explained nervously.

"She has something to say to—to your cousin before he goes."

The little man looked almost as pale as poor Dick himself.

Ninon shook hands with Dick.

"Good-night," she said, with a forced smile, "and I suppose it is to be good-bye as well."

"No, not good-bye," returned Dick, with praiseworthy coolness.

"Of course I shall see you off to-morrow."

And so, with a stiff nod to the Baronet, he went away, leaving his promised wife alone with Sir Robert Davenant."

CHAPTER XIII.

SIR ROBERT had made up his mind to renew his proposal to Miss Masserene.

He had tried, as he sat on the yellow-china tub under the awning, to persuade himself that it was all the better for him that Ninon was going away, that if she remained much longer he would undoubtedly make a fool of himself.

For, though even more in love with the young beauty than he had been at Dinard, he was decidedly less convinced of her desirability as a wife.

What would his mother say to him if he should bring home that brilliant young coquette to be a daughter to her and the mistress of the stately old house where he was born?

How would Ninon ever endure the monotony of their country life for six months in the year, with hardly a man but a neighboring squire or two and the Vicar to talk to?

She was in there now, talking to that conceited fool St Leonards.

For his—Sir Robert's—part, he wondered what women could see in St. Leonards to make such a fuss about, well-born as the actor undoubtedly was, or how they could ever believe a word the fellow said, when they knew it was his business to make love to order.

Miss Masserene had hardly addressed a word to him, mused Sir Robert jealously, since they came back from the theatre.

But perhaps that was because he had sulked.

He had not been able to help it when that long-haired donkey—this applied to poor Ernest Savage—insisted on sitting next to her and whispering in her ear, instead of letting the girl eat her supper in peace.

No, it was not because he had sulked.

It was because she was a born flirt.

A man would be a fool who should trust his happiness in her hands.

Sir Robert told himself with determination that he would think of her no longer, that he would not say one word to prevent her going back to Marybridge to-morrow.

But then a little burst of music stole through the open windows, and with it there arose within him a sudden remembrance of the sweet pale face of the dazzling blue eyes, the magnificent black hair of the girl who had bewitched him.

The little Baronet started to his feet and stepped back into the drawing-room, to find Lady Ingram alone with Charles St. Leonards, who was playing and singing scraps of Sullivan's new opera to her. Ninon had disappeared.

"Sir Robert," said Lady Ingram at once, "will you go and ask Dick, my cousin to come to me for a moment? He is in the conservatory with Ninon."

Sir Robert obeyed with feverish alacrity, and, as has been told, appeared among the palms and the sleeping flowers at the very moment when Ninon had sealed her fate and engaged herself to her cousin.

The girl felt strung up, excited, overdone.

The feeling was strong upon her that she had taken the maddest step that it was possible for her to take; but—her old excuse—she could not help it.

The thing was done.

It was beyond recall.

And the best thing she could do was to forget it until it should be forced again upon her remembrance.

She turned her charming pale face to her new wooer, and greeted him as she had greeted Dick, with a smile, and a flower in her outstretched hand.

"Have you come to make it up and promise to be a good boy in the future?" she asked with her bright melancholy smile.

"Do you think it is right of you to bother your friends for a whole evening like that? I had no idea, Sir Robert, that you had such a dreadfully bad temper!"

Sir Robert took the flower and the hand that held it.

Ninon tried to draw her feverish little fingers away; but he clasped them tightly, alarmed at his own audacity.

"I only gave you the flower," said the girl, haughtily.

Sir Robert colored up to the roots of his hair hair.

"Will you give me the hand too?" he stammered abruptly.

Ninon shook her head demurely.

"You have two of your own," she answered.

"Don't be greedy."

"No—hang it all,don't laugh at a fellow!" pleaded the little man earnestly. "Miss Masserene, I am serious; I never was more serious in the whole course of my life. I—I love you. You have known that ever since that night in Dinard, when you would not answer me. I—I adore you! For Heaven's sake, tell me that you will be my wife!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

In a Moment.

BY ERNEST L. SMITH.

STANDING by the window, with a thoughtful look in her dark blue eyes, and a wistfulness about her little red mouth, Isabel Jeffrey was indulging in one of the retrospective memories she did not very often give way to.

But to-morrow was New Year's Day, and in the old times that seemed so far back, it had been the gayest happiest day of all the year for her, when the elegant parlors in her father's mansion on Madison Avenue had been decorated with flowers, and the windows darkened, and the gas had been lighted in pink and silver globes,and every luxury and delicacy been served on the New Year's table by the waiters in the Jeffrey livery.

And Isabel queened it over all—young, fair, rich, happy, hopeful.

Five years passed, and now she was a woman of twenty-three, whose best dress was a cashmere, whose home was in three rooms, whose father had been dead over since the terrible break-up in his financial affairs, and whose friends, whose name had been legion, were scattered she never knew where.

It had been pretty much the same old story.

Isabel had had to face the world, and she had done it bravely.

She had been fortunate enough to obtain a position in a store, and on her hardly-earned salary of six dollars a week, she managed to make a fairly comfortable home for herself, her delicate little lady-mother, and her ten years-old-sister.

Of course it was hard—awfully hard—to stand it; but people have to endure just such things, and the more brave and cheerful and philosophic they can be, the easier it is for them; although beyond the philosophy that Isabel Jeffrey brought to bear, was her religion, her sweet patient trusting that helped her so much, that kept her very gentle and uncomplaining all these dark days, when, more keenly than loss of property, or home, or friends, was the ever constant memory of Jack Mervine's handsome face, and bold blue eyes, and charming voice, and caressing manner.

They had never been lovers, that is, engaged lovers, nor had Jack ever said much of anything special to her.

All the same though Isabel had been very sure of him.

So sure that she was perfectly content to wait just as long as fate ordained.

And then, just at the time when he should have been staunch and true, if his love were worth anything, so Isabel reasoned, just as bitterly, he had gone with the crowd that had deserted the Jeffreys in their reverses.

And in five years Isabel had never seen him or heard his name spoken.

Poor little soul!

The big tears would start to her lovely wistful eyes as she stood there between lights that New Year's Eve, that might have been so different.

For perhaps half an hour she stood there looking down into the brilliantly lighted street below, with its throngs of people hurrying through the stinging cold, the solemn moonlight shining high, and pure and holy above all.

"If only Jack had not gone with the rest!

"Oh, if only he had stayed and loved me!"

That was the burden of her thought, just as heavy that night, five years from the time since she had seen his handsome smiling eyes, as at the first.

Unwomanly?

Well, I think not—certainly not.

She had cared for him from the very first and she would care for him to the very latest throb of her loyal heart, choosing—nay, perforce, having to suffer her loss of him, rather than enjoy another man's love.

Directly, with a little sigh, she dashed the big slow-dropping tears off her lashes, and obeyed Bessie's cheerful summons to supper, and went slowly out to the neat frugal little meal of buttered toast and cold thin-sliced ham and mustard.

And delicious steaming tea and a wee taste of canned pine-apples.

Then she returned to the store, where, after hours, Dell Amber took her confidentially aside and imparted a delicious bit of information and an invitation.

"Grandma Amber, up in Jersey you know, Isabel, has sent me the loveliest invitation to spend New Year's Day with her at the farm, and she wants me to bring somebody with me.

"You'll go won't you, Isabel?

"Do, do!

"You'll enjoy it ever so much if you like sleigh-riding and want turkey, and mincepies, and cider, and walnuts, and a roaring big fire in the open fireplace, and everything old-fashioned and countryfied. You will go with me, won't you?"

An unusual little thrill of delight crept over Isabel.

Oh, what a blessed, blessed rest a day in the country would be, where, if anywhere in all the wide world, she could banish the memories that every New Year's Day persistently brought!"

"I really belive I will accept your charming invitation, Dell.

"Yes, I will go, and thank you a thousand times, only I never can repay you."

Dell gave her hand a loving little squeeze.

"You are a darling!

"Grandpa is to meet the seven-thirty train with the big sleigh, and we'll have a five-mile ride to begin with.

"Oh, we'll enjoy ourselves immensely, Isabel!

"And don't you ever say another word about paying anybody back.

"It's an honor you pay me, Isabel."

* * * * * *

New Year's Day, clear and sparkling, and frosty and exhilarant, and the Amber farmhouse, warm, and sunshiny, and low-ceiled, and odorous with the plentiful preparation progressing for the marvelous dinner.

And grandma Amber, portly, happy, merry as a girl, a big apron tied around her comfortable waist and her spectacles on the top of her thick grey hair, the very ideal of the hostess; while grandpa Amber hale, hearty, and jolly, was like a grown up boy, all that lovely day, when Dell and Isabel thoroughly enjoyed every single moment.

As,Isabel had thought, there was almost absolute surcease from stinging memory, amid the delightful novelties all around her, and only at rare intervals did she find herself allowing thoughts of the one above all others to creep in.

"It has been a grand, good day, so far," Dell declared with a happy sigh, at three o'clock of the bright, cold afternoon; "but the best is to come yet.

"What do you think, Mademoiselle Isabel?

"The big folks over at the big house—otherwise the St. Clements, of the Hollies—have invited you and me over to dinner, and to assist the young ladies in receiving.

"Imagine us.

"Two of Macy's sales-ladies receiving New Year calls.

"I don't know what to do.

"Do you?"

A cruel little pang smote Isabel, but she repressed all sign of it

"We can be as agreeable as we know how; I imagine that is the secret of all true entertainment.

"But our dresses, Dell.

"Do you really want to go?"

"Do I really want to go?

"Well, I should say so.

"It's just too lovely for anything.

"Mr. St. Clements driving over to ask us, with 'Miss St. Clements' and Miss Mabel's compliments'"

"But dear—our dresses—" began Isabel, looking deprecatingly at her well-worn black cashmere.

"They won't expect us to be dressed stylishly or expensively.

"A bit of bright ribbon and lace—the ribbon off our hats, Isabel, and I know where grandma has some lace."

But Isabel was hard to be persuaded.

"I would so much rather stay here and talk to grandma, while you go to the Hollies, Dell.

"Let grandpa drive you over, dear. I won't mind your going in the least."

But Dell was obstinate.

Unless Isabel went she would not go,and when Isabel saw the disappointment Dell would not express, she relented, with a desperate little curb on her own inclination and consented; nor did she permit Dell to gain the slightest idea of the cruel stab it was to her to go to the splendid house, where everything reminded her so painfully of the very thing she had come away out here to escape.

Mrs. St. Clements was the very impersonation of refined womanliness and erect graciousness, and she instantly recognized the nobility of Isabel Jeffrey, as she saw her pure sweet face—her grave, sad, yet interested attention; her quiet reserve and ease of manner, while the young ladies were friendly and social, as only the real aristocrat can be.

"Our friends are nearly all to come from the city," Mabel explained, when they were all seated in the parlor.

"A few of them have been and gone, but the majority of those we expect are yet to come.

"And the first arrival, grandma," she added, with a little laugh, as a sleigh-load of gentlemen dashed up to the door.

And the very first one to enter the room was Jack Mervine—handsome, elegant as ever, and the first person he saw was Isabel Jeffrey.

For one little awful second she thought she should faint or die, because of that sensation that overwhelmed her.

He saw she inclined her head coldly as a duchess might have done.

"Mr. Mervine."

But her repelling tone, proud as icy, did not freeze him.

Utterly ignoring Mrs. St. Clements, who really was busy with the other gentlemen, and Miss St. Clements, he went straight up to her.

"Isabel, where have you been?"

"If you had wanted very much to know, you might have learned where."

Her eyes met his—haughty, steady—his momentarily darkening with emotion.

"I swear to you I could not find you.

"I thank Heaven I have found you.

"Isabel," and he dropped his head forward, and his voice lowered to a quick passionate whisper, "will you be my wife?

"Quick! before I lose you again, my darling."

And all the warm color left her face for one brief instant, as she looked in his eyes—the man she loved.

"Yes," she said.

And with a triumph almost beyond imagination, he linked her arm in his,and turned towards them.

It all had happened in a moment.

"Friends,this is my betrothed bride,Miss Isabel Jeffrey.

"Will you not wish us a Happy New Year."

And then explanations were briefly made.

* * * * * *

"It has been a day of days," Isabel said, between smiles and tears, as she told it all to her mother, in their little quiet home, that blessed New Year's night.

"We are to be married at once, mamma, because Jack insists on it—next week, mamma.

"And once more you will have your carriage to ride in, and your laces and diamonds to wear.

"But if he had been a beggar, shovelling off the snow for his dinner, and had asked me to be his wife, I should have said Yes all the same.

"Oh, mamma, mamma, I am so happy."

ABOUT THE TIME.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1882, is on Monday. The following prophecy of what a Monday Christmas brings is taken from the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum:

"If Christmas day on Monday be,
A great winter that year you'll see,
And full of winds, both loud and shrill;
But in summer, truth to tell,
High winds shall there be, and strong,
Full of tempests lasting long;
While battles they shall multiply.
They that be born that day, I ween,
They shall be strong, each one and keen;
He shall be found that stealeth aught;
Though thou be sick, thou diest not."

In the year 1652,the Members of the English House of Commons held a serious debate on the proposed abolition of Christmas Day:

"The House spent much time this day (December 24, 1652,) about the business of the navy for settling the affairs at sea, and before they rose were presented with a terrible remonstrance against Christmas Day, founded upon Divine Scriptures, in consequence of which Parliament spent much valuable time in consultation about the abolition of Christmas Day,passed orders to that effect,and resolved to sit on the following day, which was commonly called Christmas Day."

We who so much enjoy our "Merry Christmas," feel glad that the "orders to that effect" are not enforced in our own time.

The Cromwellian Parliament should also have made a law for the abolition of plum-pudding, as that is one of the remains of heathen ceremonies, being originally offered as a cake composed of the productions of the earth—the suet, milk and eggs representing the animal products, salt the mineral, and the other ingredients the vegetable.

It was on Christmas Day, 1066, that William the Conqueror was crowned in Westminster Abbey; and on Christmas Day, 800, Charlemagne was crowned at Rome.

The word "mass" is of Saxon origin, and means "a festival."

The meaning of Christmas is "the festival, or feast of Christ;" "Noel," the French name of Christmas, means "good news."

The proverbial saying that "Christmas comes but once a year," has been enlarged on as follows by a modern poet:

"Christmas comes but once a year—
That plea's supposed to be a softener,
But since it costs one precious dear,
One's precious glad it don't come oftener."

THE SORROWFUL TREE.—A peculiar tree, named the "Sorrowful," grows upon the island of Goa, near Bombay. It flourishes only at night. The flowers, which have a fragrant odor, appear soon after sunset the year round, and close up or fall off as the sun rises.

THE deacon's son was telling the minister about the bees stinging his papa, and the minister inquired: "Stung your papa, did they? Well, what did your papa say?" "Step this way a moment," said the boy, "I'd rather whisper it to you."

Bric-a-Brac.

THE WINE BOTTLE.—Thackeray wrote solid truth in the remark, "The intimacy begotten over the wine bottle has no heart."

QUEER QUERIES.—The following queries have not been propounded by the Concord School of Philosophy: "Why do not cows sit down to rest the same as dogs? Why does a dog turn around a few times before he lies down? Why does a cow get up from the ground hind-end first, and a horse fore-end first? Why does a squirrel come down head first, and a cat tail first?

WHAT THEY GOT.—A former Marquis of Alberon, determining, at least in his own arrangements, to obtain punctuality from his visitors, invited a large party to dinner. The card mentioned five precisely. His Lordship found himself attended at that hour by a single gentleman. He, however sat down to dinner with him and partook of the first course. About six his visitors began to drop in; His Lordship made no apology; they seated themselve in awkward confusion, looked at their watches,and took dinner. The still more polite part of the company arrived about seven,and instead of dinner were complimented with coffee.

EXCOMMUNICATION.—The Catholic church excommunicates by bell, book and candle. The Popes have carried their authority to such excess as to excommunicate and depose sovereigns. Gregory VII. was the first Pope who assumed this power. He excommunicated Henry IV. Emperor of Germany, in 1077, absolving his subjects from their allegiance; and on the Emperor's death, "his excommunicated body" was five years above ground, no one daring to bury it. In England were many excommunications in Henry II.'s reign; and King John was excommunicated by Pope Innocent III. in 1208, when all England lay under an interdict for six years. The citizens of Dublin were excommunicated by Clement IV. in 1206.

THREE THINGS.—Three things to love—courage, gentleness and affection. Three things to admire—intellect, dignity and gracefulness. Three things to hate—cruelty, arrogance and ingratitude. Three things to delight in—beauty, frankness and freedom. Three things to wish for—health friends and a contented spirit. Three things to like—cordiality, good humor and cheerfulness. Three things to avoid—idleness, loquacity and flippant jesting. Three things to contend for—honor, country and friends. Three things to teach—truth, industry and contentment. Three things to govern—our temper, tongue and conduct. Three things to cherish—virtue, wisdom and goodness. Three things to do—think, live, act.

A STRANGE DUEL.—A duel was lately fought in Texas by Alexander Shott and John S. Nott. Nott was shot, and Shott was not. In this case it is better to be Shott than Nott. There was a rumor that Nott was not shot, and Shott avows that he shot Nott,which proves either that the shot Shott at Nott was not shot, or that Nott was shot notwithstanding. Circumstantial evidence is not always good. It may be made to appear on trial that the shot Shott shot shot Nott, or, as accidents with firearms are frequent, it may be possible that the shot Shott shot shot Shott himself, when the whole affair would resolve itself into its original elements, and Shott would be shot,and Nott would be not. We think, however, that the shot Shott shot shot not Shott, but Nott; anyway, it is hard to tell who was shot.

THE REINDEER.—In a new work an Artic traveler describes a curious scene, encountered by him in Lapland, illustrative of the habits of the most generally known of Arctic animals. On entering a forest he suddenly found himself in the midst of a great number of reindeer which were digging through the snow for the moss of which they are so fond. All except the younger ones were working lustily, evidently very hungry. They dug first with one fore-foot, then with the other, the holes gradually becoming larger and larger, and the bodies of the animals becoming more and more hidden. The snow was about four feet in depth, and some of the holes had been dug so far that nothing save their swaying tails could be seen of some of the reindeer. In every direction these busy creatures were to be seen toiling with the sole object of reaching the moss covered by the snow.

THE OLD STORY.—A certain young lady, possessing more than ordinary accomplishment for her class of life—being the daughter of poor but respectable parents—on the death of a wealthy relative, recently, became entitled to forty thousand dollars. When the glad tidings reached the ears of her neighbors, many warm admirers flocked around the hitherto neglected beauty, and there was no end to the overture of love. Previous to the turn in fortune's wheel, a young man of humble pretensions had been the young lady's only suitor, but the knowledge of her wealth at once placed a formidable barrier in his way, and he contented himself with being a silent worshipper at a distance. Matters untimely came to a crisis, and in order to test the affection of her devotees, the young lady caused a report to be circulated that her supposed fortune was in reality only a sham, the mistake having occurred through a similarity of name. The intelligence had the effect of causing the visits of the lovers to become less frequent, and finally ceased altogether. The humble youth rejoiced in the change,and at once took the opportunity to console the mistress of his heart, who, to the surprise of all, rewarded his sincerity with her hand, and made him the sole master of forty thousand dollars.

"JUST FOR A WOMAN."

Just for a woman a dead boy lies
  In the grass by the murmuring stream,
And but for the stare in his sad blue eyes
  And the hole in his curls, it would seem
  He was lying there in a dream.

The cowslips, kissing the cold, white face
  With diamond-dew, glisten and weep,
And out from the dusky forest-place
  The timorous squirrels peep:
  But the boy never stirs in his sleep.

Oh, ask of the rivulet gurgling by
  How they met at the dawn of the day,
Dark shadows against the eastern sky—
  The shot, and the flash, and the gray
  Smoke that circled and drifted away.

The red, curving lips are half parted, as though
  The name that he loved lingered there—
The name of a woman that leaped with flow
  Of the blood from his heart like a prayer,
  And died in a gasp on the air.

Just for a woman a dead boy lies
  On the grass 'neath the stars' cold light;
But, oh, could he see the laughter-lit eyes
  And the gem-covered bosom so bright
Of the woman who dances to-night.

RED RIDING-HOOD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PENKIVEL; OR, THE MYSTERY OF ST. EGLON," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLVI.—[CONTINUED.]

"THE reasons for my belief are twofold," said Lord Enderby.

"Firstly, the guide is a scoundrel, as he has proved by bringing us on the wrong road and betrayed us to his friends, with whom no doubt he'll share the spoil."

"I'll grant the scoundrelism—as large amount of it as you please."

"Then, being a scoundrel," resumed Lord Enderby, "and having sold us once for money—as I know assuredly was the case—cannot you see that he would gladly do it a second time?"

"He might, if he had the chance," returned Lord Soulis; but I cannot see who is likely to bribe him to his own ultimate loss.

"I know no one at Palermo who has a right to thirst for our blood.

"And, since there will be no ransom paid unless we are delivered up alive and sound, it appears only reasonable to suppose that, being valuable, we shall be taken good care of; and the guide will hasten back with news of the money, and take, as is fair, a double share of the booty as his own portion."

Lord Enderby had finished his cigar; he threw away the end, and, folding his arms, looked up at the narrow strip of intensely blue sky visible above their prison.

"Soulis," he said presently, "you have all the logic on your side, and yet I feel and know that you are wrong.

"You may escape ultimately on payment of ransom; but I have been seized and brought hither only to die."

Lord Soulis tried to answer gaily and steadily; but, in spite of his courage, there was a quiver in his fresh young voice as he spoke.

"If they kill you, Enderby, I shall not escape.

"Where thou diest, there will I die, and there will I be buried.

"I gave my word to Anne, and I keep it to the death.

"I say this because I perceive you are anxious to recommence your old argument in favor of flight, and I don't want you to waste time in that way."

Lord Enderby put his hand on the young man's shoulder—put his arm, in fact, half round him, in the nearest approach to an embrace that one Englishman ever bestows on another.

"It's hard lines on me, Soulis, to make me the cause of your death because of a promise to your sister.

"Anne would never have exacted such a promise, could she have foreseen it would lead you into such danger as this."

"I deny that the danger is so great as you imagine; self-interest on the part of these ruffians is our safeguard.

"We shall laugh at this episode in our lives next week."

The young fellow strove to speak cheerfully; but somehow he failed; and, turning suddenly, he grasped Lord Enderby's hand hard, and both men remained silent a full minute.

"You are not speaking out," Soulis said presently.

"It is better to be frank.

"If you have a reason in believing in the guide's double treachery, let me hear it."

"I have a reason for fearing that he will be detained at Palermo, but it is one you will not believe."

"You spoke of his being bribed," returned Lord Soulis; "but I can scarcely believe that possible, because surely there is no one at Palermo who can be particularly anxious to see us shot!

"Then, again, the fellow would lose by it, as no bribe would be likely to reach the amount he will get as his share of the ransom."

"He might be detained forcibly," said Lord Enderby.

His friend looked up with a quick glance of amusement, but did not speak.

"There there may be some one at Palermo who desires my death, though not yours, Soulis."

"I have heard and read," returned Soulis gravely; "of Italian nobles in the old times hiring assassins to despatch an enemy, so it is quite possible that ancient anachronism may have gone back to the usages of his own century and hired this greasy picturesque band of ruffians to rid himself of us—in which case, Enderby, I should look on our situation as serious."

"I exonerate the Duke, Soulis, from all complicity in this plot.

"I do not believe he would lend himself to it;

"In fact, I am firmly of the opinion that he is even unaware that we are in Sicily."

"Then who is your enemy?" asked Soulis, with astonishment.

"When we were suddenly surrounded and seized, did you observe a tall man on horseback, at a distance, evidently giving directions?

"He wore a green patch over his eye, and the lower part of his face was concealed by handkerchief."

"Yes, I noticed him."

"Well, I saw that man again yesterday, and he is Delgado."

Lord Soulis threw down his cigar, and a creeping paleness gathered on his young face.

"That scamp, was it?" he said.

"Then I believe your assertion, Enderby.

"Your life is threatened, and it is you who must try to escape.

"I never saw such a demoniacal expression of hate come over any human face as I saw over Delgado's one night as he looked at you, when you were watching Mademoiselle di Valdivia's departure from the theatre.

"Yes, I can believe in any diabolical plot of that man's against your life.

"Enderby, you must escape!"

"It would be impossible, Soulis; but you can escape, and by so doing you might give me a chance for life."

"How?" asked Soulis, in a despairing voice.

"It seems to me that I should only be leaving you like a coward to a ghastly fate."

"You can do me no good by dying with me, my dear Soulis, but by running away you would gain a chance of saving me.

"You could get with all speed to Palermo and procure the ransom—in gold—and bring it to the spot indicated by the brigand chief.

"The sight of the money would be sufficient to save my life.

"The brigands would not lose it, and oblige Delgado then by shooting me."

"There's reason in your words," returned Lord Soulis thoughtfully.

"I'll sound the commander of these greasy scoundrels as soon as he returns from his dinner."

One of the "scoundrels" was now lounging towards them from the entry, and both men jumped up from their reclining attitude as he approached them.

"Don't let me disturb the signori," he said, with great politeness.

"I have brought them a newspaper which I got down yonder"—pointing vaguely over the peaks—"where I bought some fowls for the honorable gentleman's dinner."

"Much obliged," returned Lord Soulis, with immense politeness.

"Is there any news of the messenger?"

"The messenger still tarries; but doubtless the evening will bring him.

"Do the honorable gentleman desire now to be served with their dinner?"

"Most assuredly yes," said Lord Soulis, punctiliously returning the bow with which the man departed.

"It is a comfort they don't starve us," he observed, turning to his friend; but a strange look on Lord Enderby's face arrested his words.

"What is it?" he asked eagerly.

For answer Lord Enderby handed him the paper, placing his finger on a certain paragraph.

It announced the death of Lady Brentwyche, and added a regret that her friends were absent from Naples, two being still in the hands of the brigands, and the others having departed for Palermo in the hope of assisting them.

"Soulis, you ought to be with your sister," said Lord Enderby; "she must be in great distress.

"Here is another urgent reason why you should do your utmost to escape."

"Was she in the habit of taking sleeping-ing potions?" asked Lord Soulis, ignoring the other's remark.

"I think so; but I fear in this instance the dose was doubled purposely, or there was some deadly ingredient mixed with it."

"How can you imagine anything so ghastly?

"What motive could any one have for such a crime?"

"The motive might be vengeance," said Lord Enderby, his face every instant taking graver and sadder lines.

"She is dead; therefore I cannot injure her now by telling you the truth.

"She was a secret agent of the Russian police, while by the Nihilists she was supposed to be a faithful member of their society, and was greatly trusted by them.

"If they have discovered her treachery, it is they who have killed her."

"Then I hope they'll all be hanged!" said Soulis emphatically.

"They are a worse set of scoundrels than these open robbers who have got us in their clutch.

"They at least don't work with dynamite and mines and secret murders."

"My dear Soulis, we see what the Nihilists do, but we can't see what they prevent.

"There are elements of destruction at work which, if let loose, would carry their forces like a flood of burning lava over hut and palace alike."

"My dear Enderby, you are worse than that lamenting prophet Jeremiah," said Soulis.

"I am a great believer in red-coats and cannons, rifles and policemen.

"Depend upon it, the secret societies are not going to shake us to pieces just yet."

"They will do it when their mine is ready.

"I speak who have been underground and know how they work.

"If red-coats and police are among them, where is your security?"

"Well, if our cannons and rifles are turned against us, there is still honest manhood left in the world to break through the chaos and conquer it."

"Yes, but we cannot reckon the cost," said Lord Enderby.

At this juncture the dinner arrived, and in spite of danger and anxiety, it was eaten with a considerable amount of appetite, and with many a cheerful attempt on the part of the younger prisoner to answer the jests of their captors, who stood around them as if their meal was a kind of exhibition got through with for their amusement.

The Italian Soulis spoke caused a good deal of laughter to these Sicilians, while their dialect was sometimes incomprehensible to him.

"Who would believe," said Soulis, "that these merry good-tempered ruffians have made up their minds to kill us?

"One of the rascals is positively a domestic character; he has a wife, and a baby swathed round and round so stiffly and tight that I verily believe it could stand up on end like a drum.

"When I first saw it, I took it for a little Egyptian mummy just come to life after a pretty long sleep of a few thousand of years."

When the chief or captain returned, Soulis sounded him with a hinted promise of a handsome bribe if he or Enderby was allowed to go to Palermo for the ransom.

The man replied sullenly that a second suggestion of that sort would be answered by a bullet.

He could trust the messenger, and, if he did not bring faithful assurances of the payment of the ransom demanded, then no one would, and he and his friend had better prepare for the worst.

He was a man who always kept his word, and he intended to have their money or their lives.

If the ransom was not forthcoming, he would send them piecemeal to their relatives, in order that they might understand what an honorable gentleman a brigand was.

As for an attempt to escape and fetch soldiers, it would be met with instant death.

Soulis related the pith of this speech to his fellow prisoner, with the remark that now at least he would not be bullied any more with urgent entreaties to pack his carpet-bag and depart by the antelope express.

It was a feeble attempt at a jest; it was a proof that the young fellow's heart was beginning to fail him.

The day declined, the sun left the gorge, there were no shadows within its gloom; but a pale clear light made everything visible as the strongest sunlight might have done.

And, as the two friends paced up and down, each saw the other's face take a paler, graver hue.

The day was over, and no tidings had come from Palermo, no messenger had returned with promise of ransom.

Lord Soulis threw himself down and once more seized the newspaper.

"Considering our position," he said in a moment, "the authorities ought not to permit threats against this band of brigands to be printed.

"What do you say, Enderby?

"If there any chance of a rescue through a military detachment?"

"How would they find us?

"The road to this defile is a secret known only to these men.

"We were led here blindfold that we might never never recognize it again.

"Moreover, the news of a party of soldiers being sent out would be brought to them at once by their scouts, and we should then be killed either without mercy or be hurried off to some still more secret haunt of theirs in the mountains."

"Then I begin to think ours a hopeless case," returned the young man, throwing down the paper dejectedly.

"See here, Soulis; you must not think that with regard to yourself.

"You were seized simply because you happened to be with me.

"As soon as I am dead, you will be released."

"That is not a cheerful way of putting it," returned his friend, in a vexed tone.

"Here, sit down and have a smoke, and let us discuss the bearings of the situation once more.

"Firstly, you assert this is a secret society move, and these unsavory robbers are only the instruments of your old friends the Nihilists.

"Now what reason have you for supposing such a wild thing?"

"I will tell you, if you will listen to a long story.

"I am all ears," answered his friend; "and I wish I was all wings too."

"When I was a young fellow of about sixteen, I went to St. Petersburg to join an uncle—my mother's brother—a merchant there.

"Apparently I had no chance then of either wealth or title.

"You know through what a succession of fatalities I gained both?"

Soulis nodded, and Lord Enderby went on in a quiet tone.

"While at St. Petersburg I made the acquaintance of a young Pole.

"He was a Nihilist—a fact which did not prevent him from being a generous, noble-hearted young fellow.

"He was dear to me as a brother.

"One night he was seized and carried to prison; no one knew where he was.

"I could only guess that he had been arrested.

"At length, after a few days' suspense, I got a message from him, entreating me to come to him.

"The message and our interview were both managed by bribery.

"I found him dying.

"Even at this distance of time I cannot tell how he died or how he looked.

"I was sick with horror.

"He told me that his life and liberty had been offered him on condition of his betraying his friends.

"He refused.

"Then, in the hope of obtaining information or names of people suspected to be Nihilists; they tried torture; and he died.

"There is his history; it made me a Nihilist.

"And yet it was not altogether his doing; another person had some hand in it.

"Lodging in the same house with me and with him was a young and very beautiful English girl—a governess out of a situation.

"She was frightfully poor, and there was a sort of defiant desperation about her, as if she had looked life in the face and seen its worst, which struck us both as remarkable.

"The Pole had loved her, and met with no return; yet she was passionately moved at his death.

"Her tears and her persuasions turned the scale in my mind.

"I listened to her entreaties and joined the Nihilists."

"If she had been old and ugly, she would have had no power to influence you to do such a mad thing," observed Lord Soulis, with interest only half awakened.

"Perhaps not," resumed Lord Enderby.

"At all events, I did it, and repented of it.

"As I gradually became initiated into their doctrines, I perceived that an English mind could scarcely run in the same groove with theirs."

"No; I should say decidedly not," observed Lord Soulis dryly.

"Yet they are not all sinners," said Lord Enderby; "they have, in fact, a tremendous right on their side theoretically, but practically——"

"They are explosive," interposed his friend.

"I beg pardon, Enderby; I see you are half a Nihilist still.

"Go on; I am getting interested."

"There is not much more to tell.

"A task fell to me which I flatly refused to fulfil.

"This led to a final rupture, and I left them with a very outspoken speech, in which I said I would never betray a Nihilist, and never help one."

"And you kept your word in that latter clause when the Duke appealed to you under the name of Rene."

"Just so," resumed Lord Enderby, in a sad tone.

"The other clause was not believed.

"I was condemned to death as a traitor and a spy—a fact which has been kept constantly before my eyes ever since by a shoal of threatening letters."

"It does not sound real," said Lord Soulis.

"It is too romantic."

"It is nevertheless as real and true as these brigands."

"Who have no more right to exist than the anachronism, or the Nihilists, or the Fenians," said Soulis.

"They are as much a part of the century as steam and electricity.

"This age, which has been called prosaic, is, in fact, full of mysteries, wonders, romance, miracles, and crime.

"I will finish my story quickly, Soulis.

"Before the sentence of which I have spoken was conveyed to me, I fell ill with fever.

"I was nursed through it kindly by the English governess.

"But at one time I was thought to be dying, and it was then that she made a confession to me.

"To save her life, for she had been seized the same night as my friend had, she had taken upon herself the office of spy and informer, and she had betrayed secrets known only to herself and me, and a few others, staunch Nihilists.

"For this betrayal, the Committee tried and condemned me.

"Well, you perceive my position?

"I could defend myself only at the cost of her life.

"She had told me her secret when she imagined me to be dying.

"I could not take advantage of it.

"I have never done so.

"She soon took a new situation with a widower, a Russian noble; she married him, and when he died, she married your uncle, Lord Brentwyche."

"I guessed so much," said Lord Soulis, quietly.

"And if, as you imagine, her death was not a natural one?"

"Then I should ascribe it to an act of vengeance, or justice, as the Nihilist would call it; and I have been wondering in that case how it would affect our position here."

"Well, if these pleasant friends of yours get at the truth respecting her, they would,

I should say, acquit you," said Lord Soulis.

"And then, if we are let live long, we shall be set free.

"I confess, however, that my recollection of that man Delgado does not give me cheerful thoughts.

"His expression as he glared at you that night was deadly.

"I am sure, too, now that the conversation I overheard referred to some plot against you.

"No doubt it did," observed Lord Enderby.

"So you see, Soulis, I am caught in a snare which he has certainly laid for me; but, if he succeeds, you will defend Grace after I am gone?"

"With my life," said Lord Soulis, as his young face flushed vividly.

"I promise you she shall never fall into his hands.

"Anne will help her.

"But don't be down-hearted, old fellow; you have lived a good many years since that villainous Committee coolly condemned you to death; I don't see why you should not live on."

Lord Enderby colored slightly as he answered:

"I have reason to think I have owed my life to Lady Brentwyche's entreaty.

"She was more weak than wicked; she would have been horrified if I had perished through her."

"And she loved Anne," said Lord Soulis, "and would not easily have borne to see her grieved.

"At such a time we can speak truth to each other.

"Anne has known you so many years that it would be strange if you were nothing to her."

"Let us try if there is any sleep to be had on our primitive bed of heather," said Lord Enderby.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE days passed on wearily, and each brought its fever of expectation, its chill of disappointment.

No more newspapers were brought to the prisoners, no news from the outer world; no letter or message from friend or relative touched their loneliness with a ray of hope.

The blank silence added an inexpressible weight of gloom to the drear anxiety and terror of the time.

The younger man's spirits flagged; his happy boyish nature abhorred the thought of death, he shrank from it with loathing; and, though he still talked gaily, this was evidently only in feverishness of mind or by a forced effort of the will.

Often he caught his friend's eyes fixed on him in a gaze of infinite sorrow; it was at such time that he strove his utmost to appear careless and cheerful.

As each day passed, bringing less and less hope of the ransom, the brigands grew sullen, morose, and silent.

The courtesy with which they had at first treated their prisoners gave way to roughness and threats.

On the fifth day those menaces grew dangerous.

"A hand or a foot sent down to Palermo might awaken your friend to the necessity of paying the ransom," observed the chief sardonically to Lord Enderby.

"If you had taken my advice," he answered, "and allowed my friend to go to Palermo, you would have received the sum you demand long ago."

Though he spoke this sentence in very fair Italian, the ruffian understood it perfectly; and an eager look sprang into his greedy eyes.

He questioned and cross-questioned him on the chances of the money being procured through the liberation of Lord Soulis; and at length appeared to believe that it would be for his own interest to set him free.

"The messenger has been detained by some one who wishes to cheat you of the money," said Lord Enderby, "but no one will dare detain my friend.

"He will return with the ransom with all possible speed."

"Well, I will think of it.

"I will let you know to-morrow.

"But at the present every man I have ventured to send to the city has come back with the news that the ransom will not be paid; and all around us are rumors that detachments of soldiery are out scouring the mountains.

"If they draw very near us, I warn you that the first bullet fired will be in your breast."

The robber said this with slow deliberation, and then turned on his heel, but came back half a step to add:

"And our neighbor, the Duke di Valdivia, has been out carefully searching for you.

"But he will not frighten our brave men: he will only hasten your death."

Lord Enderby heard this with a bound of the heart that sent his blood coursing through his frame in a glow of hope.

He had thought continually of Grace; he had wondered much whether she had seen a paper, and read the account of his and his friend's capture.

He had dwelt upon her grief and terror; but he had never thought it possible she could make any effort to save him.

Now he was sure it was at her prayer that the Duke was acting on his behalf; and the star of hope within him was raised by the certainty that he would not do this unless Lady Brentwyche's death had cleared his mind of old ideas, and, if his, then those of others also; and most likely, if he were once set free from the present danger, his path henceforth would be a safe one.

For years he had borne bravely to live under the shadow of threatened death; only those who exist under the terrors of Nihilism, under the fear of death and treachery, can understand the full horror of such a life.

To be freed from it was like passing from a dungeon into light; but in his case it meant more; it surely meant joy and happiness—it meant marriage with his dear and tender love, his heart's delight, the inmost treasure of his soul.

The hope set a sunshine on his face which surprised Lord Soulis as he approached him.

"What have you heard?" he cried eagerly.

"News which gives me hope, Soulis.

"The Duke is trying to help us; so I trust Delgado will be baffled.

"I am convinced now that Lady Brentwyche's death will prove the means of freeing us."

"Not without the ransom," returned his friend gloomily.

"Those fellows will never let us go without the money they thirst for.

"They care nothing for the Duke or Delgado either; they will have their ducats or their pound of flesh.

"Enderby, I am giving in.

"I own it.

"A Scotchman ought to outlast an Englishman: but somehow I am not keeping up with as much pluck as you; and I am beginning to think that we are in a bad case.

"I am turning over to your opinion.

"That snaky Peruvian is detaining our messenger until the six days' grace is over."

"I believe he has received counter-orders by this time; therefore, if he is doing so, it is at a deadly peril to himself."

"Ah, well, I won't contradict you!" said Soulis.

"You are still a little mad when you touch on Nihilism.

"For my part, I believe Delgado to be a melodramatic ruffian who is cleverly managing, in an extremely theatrical and disagreeable way, to rid himself of a rival.

"But, if this child outlives you, Enderby, he won't benefit by the act.

"I shall hate plays with brigands in them henceforth; and, if we escape, I trust we shall never find ourselves in a dramatic situation again."

Lord Enderby only smiled.

"Soulis," he said, "if the captain proposes to let you go to Palermo, you will surely consent?"

"No," returned the young man doggedly.

"It is the sole thing I refuse to do to oblige you.

"It is your life that is desired, not mine.

"I believe you would be murdered before I had gone a mile.

"I stay here to the bitter end."

"My dear Soulis, by fetching a ransom you would save my life.

"But we will not talk further of this now.

"I wish that we could manufacture some torches.

"I would explore the inner grotto then."

"There is no escape that way, I am certain," replied Soulis.

"If there was but the faintest chance of such a thing, they would guard the entrance."

"I am not sure; but I am sure that there is a habitation of some kind on the other side of this peak," rejoined Lord Enderby.

"What makes you think so?" asked Soulis.

"I have seen at times a tiny waft of smoke passing over that great rock to the left," Lord Enderby answered—"a sufficient indication that chimneys are somewhere near about."

"It might be some fire made by the brigands," said Soulis, "perhaps as a signal.

"Or do you think we are near enough to the Duke's chateau for the smoke of his inhospitality to reach us?"

"I fancy not.

"As far as I could judge, we traveled in the opposite direction after the brigands seized us."

"We ought not to have tried to get to the Duke's chateau without an escort," observed Soulis.

"But who could suppose that a civilized land would nourish and encourage a band of cut-throats and robbers to set upon travelers?"

* * * * * *

The sun set on the fifth day amid gleams of lightning and low rumblings of thunder echoing from peak to peak.

After night fell, the storm rose in grandeur: the sky was like a battle-field filled with the roar of artillery, and flashes of fire rushing hither and thither with the gleam of steel.

Peak after peak caught the blue flame, and stood an instant all alight against the black sky.

Beneath, in the gorges and ravines, pine-trees fell beneath the lightning's touch and rocks came crashing and rolling from the jagged heights.

Then the rain descended in a tropical downpour; and soon the cataracts in many a hidden glen added the rush of their waters to the din.

The storm raised the spirits of Lord Soulis strangely: it was with difficulty his friend persuaded him to take shelter within the cave or grotto which served as their sleeping-chamber.

He talked excitedly, and in talking fell asleep.

Then Lord Enderby took the pine-torch which the brigands had given them, owing to the darkness of the night, and looked wistfully on his boyish fair young face.

After a moment or two of painful thought, he went, torch in hand, into the inner cave.

At the higher end a fissure in the rock, like a ragged archway, led into a narrow irregular passage; till it branched out into many such passages.

Here he paused and heard the roar of water in the distance, and felt a rush of cold air that made the flame of the low burning torch bare and flicker.

To venture into either of these passages with a light nearly burnt down would have been a folly.

He retraced his steps and flung himself down near his sleeping friend, with a sad wonder in his heart as to where the next night, when it came, would find them.

The dawn rose fresh, clear, and still, the storm had cooled the air, the morning was divine.

"This is not a day to die in," said Lord Soulis, springing up with his old happy laugh.

"There is such a stir among those fellows beyond the Needles that I believe our messenger has returned."

But at breakfast there was an ominous silence on the part of the men who served them; and, after this meal was over, they were told by the chief himself that no message and no promise of ransom had arrived.

With folded arms the robber stood looking at his prisoners with irresolution, disappointment, and rage upon his face.

His features were of a low and brutal type, but there was force and courage and craft in them.

To kill these men would defeat his own purpose: he was feverishly eager to gain the ransom and content his grumbling band with some of the plunder.

"See here," he said suddenly, turning to Lord Enderby: "you said yesterday, if your friend went to Palermo, he would bring back the money.

"Well, then, I agree to that: three of my men shall conduct him to the high-road, after which he can go on alone.

"If he returns with the money to-morrow night, well and good; if not, in the morning you die."

He waved his hand, and at this signal three men came forward from the entry; they seized Lord Soulis, blindfolded him, and led him away, giving time for scarce a word to pass between him and his friend.

There was a tight grip of the hand, one earnest word of hope, and Lord Enderby was alone.

It was an infinite relief to know that that happy young life was safe; and yet there was a tightening of his own heart and a chill feeling of desolation in seeing his friend disappear in life and safety while he was left alone to face death.

Time hurried on: night fell in coolness and rain, which had continued in heavy showers throughout the day.

Would this hinder the return journey on which his life hung?

He could not tell: he could only wait in racked patience, counting the hours in a strange, reluctant fulness that bewildered him.

Night again, and no news of Lord Soulis.

Still he might come before morning.

In this last hope Lord Enderby flung himself down upon his bed of heather and slept, yet thought that he waked.

Suddenly a cool soft hand touched his forehead; then he started up, and, thought now he dreamed, for he saw Grace.

She was standing by his couch of heath, a happy smile on her beautiful face, her hand stretched towards him.

"Grace!" he said.

Then he sprang to his feet, and in another instant his arms were around her, and her head was on his breast.

She yielded to his embrace with silent tenderness, with clinging arms that seemed to hold his very life, and head bent back that his kiss might fall upon her lips.

It was a moment to him of such supreme joy that all thoughts, all feelings, were swallowed up in the one delight of holding her close to his heart.

But a rush of memory came upon him quickly, and with it an agony for fear of her.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"GRACE, my love, my sole love, why have you come here?" said Enderby, in anguish.

"I have come for my pearl ring," she answered smiling.

"And I give you back your milprevo one in exchange.

"Ah, you cannot refuse me, Alan!

"I have been to Palermo, and heard there that you had bought a ring for me, and you and Lord Soulis had a yacht ready in which to carry away your bride.

"Well, she shall go with you.

"What!

"Do you think I dream?

"No, I am in happy waking earnest.

"All things are forgiven and forgotten.

"See here: I have the good news for you in my father's own hand."

She held a slip of paper towards him, on which he read—

"The Duke di Valdivia forgets the wrong of the prisoner Romo.

"The cloud is lifted which shadowed your name.

"The Duke is grieved at the treachery that has betrayed you into the hands of robbers, and sends men to your aid."

"Is this true?" exclaimed Lord Enderby, bewildered, amazed, wondering, as he still held her closely pressed to his side.

"Are not the brigands here still—close by, beyond the pass?"

"Hush!" returned Grace, pressing her hand upon his lips.

"Do not speak so loudly; they are here indeed beyond our Malpas; but there is our Landazar—our Rest in the Wilderness."

She pointed to the inner grotto, whence a faint light issued.

"Did you come to me that way?" exclaimed Lord Enderby, beginning to understand her meaning.

"Yes," she said; "there is a way from grotto to grotto right through this peak, and the entrance on the other side is near the convent where I am staying."

At her words he looked at her earnestly, and recognised, with a thrill of pain, that she was in the dress of a novice.

It was this garb which had given her an unfamiliar aspect, which had struck him with a little chill of fear.

"Why are you at the convent, dear Grace?

"And why in this dress?"

She turned away her face from his gaze, yet, in a moment, met his eyes again with a tender smile.

"I escaped that dreadful man by going to the convent.

"He did not dare to molest me there, and in this dress I felt safer."

Lord Enderby clenched his hand and drew her closer to his breast.

"My darling, my poor Grace, I know you have suffered much!"

"Come," she said eagerly; "we waste time.

"My father's men wait for us beyond that inner cave.

"Come at once—come quickly.

"You cannot think how long I have searched for you, and how hard you have been to find" she added, looking up at him with a strange sweet smile.

"Do you mean, Grace, you have planned an escape for me by your father's help?"

"Yes," she answered, drawing him towards the narrow arch through which the faint light of torches glimmered.

"Oh, do not linger!

"We have stayed too long already."

"But, my darling, I have given my word to those ruffians—I have promised them the ransom, and Soulis will certainly bring it in the morning."

"Alan," she said, resting her hands upon his shoulder, "Lord Soulis is in Delgado's hands, and will not be set at liberty till after ten to-morrow morning.

"Come, my darling, come!

"Will you not give me your life at my asking?"

She had drawn him within the arch, and here she put her tender arms about him and drew down his face to hers, and kissed him.

"We are very happy," she said softly, "and you are safe now."

"Alan, this is the happiest dearest moment of my life.

"Take me in your arms and say once more you love me dearly!"

"Grace, my darling, can I ever say it as I feel it?

"You are saving my life, which is yours henceforth till Death parts us."

He said these words with his arms around her, with his lips upon her fair cheek, with his heart full of a strangely passionate and tenderness, and hers beating gently against his breast.

"Yes, till Death parts us," repeated Grace.

"So we will exchange rings here, Alan, with that promise.

"Let me put this one on your finger, and you shall give me the pearls I have waited for so long.

"The brigands have not taken it from you.

"You see, I know all that has passed here.

"Delgado intended to give me that ring himself when you were dead.

"This is better; you will give it to me, with my kiss upon your lips."

He placed the ring on her finger, and her sweet tender kiss, pure as a lily's, pressed his lips.

Once more her arms tightened around him a little wildly, and her voice shook.

"You must take this, Alan, with your milprevo ring.

"It is only a word or two which you will read when you reach the daylight.

"It will be morning soon—a bright, beautiful morning that will bring you happiness and freedom.

"My love, we must say good-bye soon."

"Grace," he said, holding her a little apart from him to gaze the better on her face, "why utter such a word?

"Do you think I shall leave you?"

"Then we will say good night instead," she answered.

"I meant good night—not good-bye.

"When we part, we shall meet again in the morning—when the sun rises, Alan, and there will be no more gloom, no more night for us."

"I hope not, dearest.

"Good night then, since you wish for a good night."

He kissed her once more; and they stood silent for a few moments, with arms entwined.

Hers relaxed their hold suddenly, and then she took his hand and led him onwards.

"Another instant," she said, "and we shall have the glare of the torches round us.

"Is there anything more to say Alan?"

"A hundred thousand things, my darling; but we will say them to-morrow," he said.

"In the morning, in the full light," she said, as if finishing his words.

"Yes, we will say them then.

"Do not forget or lose the paper I have given you, Alan."

"It is here safely."

A few steps more led them beyond the narrow way, through which the light had glimmered, into the full glare of torches, amid the smoke of which there stood four or five men, and beyond these a dim figure, which in a moment Lord Enderby recognized as Molly.

"You have been a long time, Miss Grace," said Molly.

"I was never underground afore, and I'm most skeared to death.

"What with gibberish and darkness, all the bones in my body is limp."

A man now drew near and spoke in a low voice to Grace.

Lord Enderby caught only "river" and flood."

"Is there any danger, Grace," he asked, in traversing those caverns?"

"I came to you safely," she answered.

Then she waved her hand, and the men moved on, two of them holding the torches low to make the path visible.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Dorothy Pink.

BY W. H. BENCKART.

HALF way up the steep narrow street of the little village it stood, the tiny gabled roofed house, whose small leaden-paned windows overlooked with sentinel-like air the modest shop entrance beneath, in whose casement was displayed the stock of feathers, ribbons, and velvets, which represented the sole earthly wealth of Miss Dorothy Pink.

Usually the street door stood open, and behind the diminutive counter was seen the pale face of the little milliner herself; but to-day the wind rattled in vain at the bolts and bars; the space behind the counter was empty, and in the little chamber above, peering intently into the ancient black-framed looking-glass, whose cracked surface reflected back the white dimity curtains, and the glow of the small wood fire, stood Miss Dorothy herself, engaged in fastening a knot of blue ribbon at the neck of her well-worn but freshly-ironed black silk gown.

"Who would think to look at me now that I had once been young," she murmured, surveying ruefully the face that gazed pathetically back into her own.

"I do not think that after to-day I shall ever wear a blue ribbon again.

"It may do very well for the maidens with their fresh flower-like faces, but not for a woman of thirty-five, with streaks of grey in her brown locks, who buried her youth long years ago in the grave of the past."

Something that glittered like a diamond rolled down Miss Dorothy's cheek, and fell, a spot of moisture on a rusty fold of her dress.

"What, crying?" exclaimed Miss Dorothy incredulously, shaking her head at the countenance in the glass.

"Actually shedding tears because your eyes cannot always remain bright and your cheeks rosy! and when you are invited to visit cousin Silas beside!

"For shame, Dorothy Pink!

"You deserve to be left to brew your lonely cup of tea by your solitary fireside instead of dining on roast turkey and listening to the voices of your own kin!"

"Your own kin!"

The words seemed to float back on the still air, and before their echo died away the face faded from the ancient mirror, and in its place Miss Dorothy saw a low-ceiled room, on whose ample hearth the great logs burned redly, shining on the blue delf and pewter ware that lined the generous sideboard, burnishing the old-fashioned furniture till it fairly shone in the flame.

A tall grey-bearded man bent over a white-haired, white-capped matron, from whose hands the bright knitting needles had fallen unheeded.

Two handsome dark-eyed lads romped with a couple of setter dogs, and midway between them stood a young maiden with fair locks cut square on the forehead, and falling in shining curls over her shoulders; a pretty vision from the smiling upon brow to the small slippered feet that peeped from the scant folds of her flowered silken gown.

A smile of delight parted Miss Dorothy's lips, and she clasped one hand over her eyes as if to assure herself of the reality of the vision.

When she looked again the bearded man, the white-haired matron, the dark-eyed lads, and the delicate maiden had disappeared, and she saw only the wistful face that always met hers when she was wont to gaze at her own reflection.

"Gone! all gone!" she cried; "father, mother, brothers, and I—only I am left! What would Dick Weatherbee say if he could see me now?

"I, the proud girl who refused to even listen to his suit because he was poor and in my father's employ.

"How well I can remember his honest rugged face, and the soft light in his grey eyes—they were handsome eyes, poor lad! —when he promised to toil hard and win gold and fame for my sake, if I would only give him one little word of encouragement and the pink rose that I wore at my belt. I smiled at his words, and threw the flower wantonly away.

"The next day he went away, and in his stead came grim care and dire mishap.

"One by one death snatched my loved ones away, and not till then did I learn the terrible truth that my honored father died a ruined man, and that I was penniless.

"The old homestead was sold along with the fertile acres, and Deacon Pink's daughter came at last to depend for bread on the very toil that she had once so despised."

Poor Miss Dorothy!

For years she had toiled and moiled; for years she had lived her lonely life, keeping the door of memory resolutely shut, and striving to be content with the meagre happiness that fell to her lot.

But this frosty November morning there was no sunshine without or within; hope unfurled its wings, and fled away, and the grey leaden sky that frowned down on the outside world seemed a fitting type of her future life.

"And I am not brave enough to look the morrow in the face," went on Miss Dorothy.

"It is rent day, and cousin Silas is a strict landlord.

"I owe him already for one quarter, and I dread to have to tell him that I cannot make up the amount.

"Dorothy," he will say, putting on his gold glasses and looking at me as if I were a criminal, "you have no aptitude for business; really no aptitude.

"It may do very well for ladies of fortune to have whims and fancies, but you are too sensitive, Dorothy; really too sensitive."

"I suppose it is kind in him to invite a plain body like me to share his Christmas cheer, and sit at the table with his fashionable wife and daughters; but still he is hard—the world is hard, life is hard, and I don't know what to do."

By this time the blue knot was fastened the hair that was inclined to curl a little on the forehead brushed smoothly down, and Miss Dorothy was ready for her visit.

As she glanced out of the little window she caught sight of a faint ray of sunshine that flickered a moment on the sill and then vanished away.

The sight of the unexpected visitor seemed to cheer her.

"I know what I shall do," she said, answering her own query.

"I'll pretend just for this one day that I have found my youth again; that I am not poor and lonely; that some friendly heart on the earth will grow glad at my coming; that there is no such phantom as buried hope—and the morrow I will leave to Heaven."

The great parlors of Silas Pink's stately mansion were thrown open, and that august personage himself, a stout, well-dressed elderly gentleman, with fat hands and a beaming smile, stood before the costly marble mantel, warming himself in the glow of the coals, and chatting and laughing with a group of kindred spirits.

On a velvet couch was seated the lady of the house—haughty, severe, and perfectly attired—while her daughters, fresher pictures of herself, fanned themselves with languid grace, and performed the graceful duties of elegant hospitality.

Pictures adorned the tinted walls; silver mirrors flashed back the sheen of silk and the glitter of jewels.

Heavy flower-strewn carpets hushed the sound of dainty gliding footsteps, and the merry sound of music and laughter filled all the scented air.

Sitting alone—as she thought—in the library, with the cold marble eyes of the dead and gone heathen philosophers looking unwinkingly down upon her, and row upon row of gilt-titled books staring her out of countenance, was Miss Dorothy.

The wealth and elegance displayed so lavishly about her brought no pleasure to her beauty-loving nature.

Her day-dream was shattered and broken.

She had no place in this little world of beauty and fashion.

They were ashamed of her shabby dress and lack of ornament.

No faces had brightened at her approach, no voices grown lower and tenderer in kindly greeting.

She was more utterly alone than in the little chamber under the gabled roof, or in the tiny shop with its meagre stock of dingy feathers and flowers.

"I will go home," she said aloud.

"When I have seen Silas and told him of my inability to pay my debt, I will go home.

"I want no rich viands, no ruby wines. I will go back to my lonely fireside and enjoy it while I may, for to-morrow may see me without a roof to cover my head, or a spot wherein to rest my weary feet."

In a dusky corner, turning carelessly the leaves of a portfolio of rare engravings, was seated a figure, entirely hidden from view by the high-backed cushioned chair against which he leaned in idle, luxurious enjoyment.

When he heard the voice, he started and rose to his feet, and Miss Dorothy saw advancing towards her a portly grey-haired man, clad in a suit of black broadcloth.

"Pardon," he began hastily, "but did I not hear you address yourself as Deacon Pink's daughter?"

"What can that matter to a perfect stranger?" answered the little figure in the shabby silk, looking towards the open door as if to escape.

"She did not want to meet any one who had known her in youth—the youth that she had that day buried from sight for ever, poor, lonely, sensitive, heart-sick Miss Dorothy.

"Naught to a stranger, but much to a friend," answered her questioner, bending his face a little nearer.

And Miss Dorothy, looking up suddenly, found herself gazing intently into a pair of deep, earnest grey eyes, whose glance held her, spite of self, completely fascinated.

"Yes, I am Dorothy Pink," she managed to stammer, feeling as if a cruel hand was clutching her throat, "and you are, Richard Weatherbee."

This man, whose simple, loyal nature gold and its possession had not spoiled, looking down at the face of the woman he had loved in her fair girlhood, read printed there in clearest type the story of her life, and realized that care and not time had wrought the wondrous change.

"The same Dorothy of old?" he asked with meaning in his tones, but with the smile she remembered so well, the smile that alone made him seem different from other men.

"Nay, not the same," she answered, dropping her eyes she scarcely knew why, while the hot blood surged into the cheeks that had lost their roses years before.

"In the old days I was proud, and vain, and boastful.

"Now I am——"

"What?" he asked, with a little tremor in his deep voice.

"What you see," she answered, dropping her face in her hands with a bitter cry of loneliness and pain.

"My poor Dorothy!" he said softly, "what you have suffered!"

And before she knew it his strong arm was round her and she was drawn closely to his broad breast.

"Many years I have spent in foreign lands," he went on, still holding her captive, "and many faces have I seen, but strive as I would my heart could never forget its one love, its one treasure.

"A month ago I came back to this my native place.

"Then I learned of your losses, your poverty, and the hard struggle you were waging with the world.

"I will give her back the pleasures of her youth, I said, if she will but give me in return the love she once refused me.

"I am not the eager hopeful boy that sought you in the olden days, but I have loved you long and faithfully, and if you say me nay, I will go away quietly as I came, and no one will be the wiser.

"Which shall it be, Dorothy, go or stay?"

"Stay," she whispered, looking up with such a radiant face that half in amaze he turned her towards a mirror that she might see her own reflection, and pointing, triumphantly cried, "I have more than fulfilled my promise.

"I have given you back youth itself."

What mattered the sheen of silk and the glitter of jewels?

What mattered the shabby dress lightened only by the knot of blue ribbon?

What mattered the grey leaden sky without?

No jewels could equal the light that shone in Dorothy's eyes, no grey sky quench the gladness that filled Dorothy's heart.

When Silas Pink was summoned to the library he grew white with astonishment and red with gratification upon hearing the news.

"You must make this your home till you leave it for one of your own," he insisted. "Let bygones be bygones, Dorothy."

And Dorothy, too happy to bear ill will, consented to share his hospitality till she became the wife of Richard Weatherbee the banker.

Later on, when the guests had departed, and they stood arm in arm by the dying fire talking of that far remote time when life seemed a dream of ceaseless pleasure the one and of high hope and youthful ambition to the other, the musical chimes of the steeple clock rang out on the frosty air.

"Ten, eleven, twelve," he counted, bending his head to listen.

"Dorothy, Christmas Day is ended."

"The happiest Christmas Day in the world," she answered reverently; "a day to be ever remembered.

"No other day but one could ever make me so happy."

"I know," said Richard, smiling, "our wedding-day.

"Oh, Dolly, darling, do not make it too far off.

"We are not so young as we were, dear."

And Dolly smiled, and blushed, and looked very charming, for all her old dress.

And report says that the wedding was not long delayed.

Her Christmas.

BY P. C. BERRETTA.

IT didn't seem much like the coming of the Christmastide to poor little Theo as, on that cold December morning, she sat disconsolately beside the low fire in Mr. March's sitting-room, reading the note Antoinette Warner had just sent her—a most elegantly written note, with a faint odor of white rose about it.

Miss Warner had driven up to Mrs. March's door half-an-hour before, the silver-mounted harness of her thoroughbreds flashing through the murky morning light, and she had sat back among her cushions like some royal princess, while her tall footman had carried the note to Mrs. March's door, to be delivered to Theo Lansing.

And Theo sat reading it now, not knowing whether she were glad or sad, because of it.

But, whether glad or sad, the big tears were slowly dropping from her lashes, and her sweet mouth was quivering like a baby's.

No; it did not seem in the least like Christmastime's coming, and Theo wondered if the "peace on earth" was ever again to be her portion.

Her grave troubled face, her wistful eyes, her black dress told their own pitiful story—the story of loss by death, not so very long ago—just after the last Christmas bells had chimed, and a continued struggle with fate and fortune ever since—a little temporary break now and again, which had kept her from actually suffering, and Mrs. March's friendly offer of shelter and food, in return for nursery services, in those frequent hours when all else failed.

And it was one of those times now.

Her last treasure from the dear old home was sold, and her one music pupil had left her because somebody else charged something a quarter less, and Theo had well-nigh given up, when some one told her that Miss Antoinette Warner had said she would like to secure the services of a young girl, refined, intelligent, agreeable, as a sort of seamstress, attendant, and general confidential servitor, duties light and pleasant, nothing absolutely menial, pay good, privileges fair.

At the first, Theo had shrunk in pride and pain at the idea of entering Miss Warner's employ as a hired servant—not so much because it was to perform paid duties as because Antoinette Warner, young, beautiful, an heiress, had been, for some time, Theo's rival in Forrest Clarimond's affection—in those days, an eternity now, it seemed to Theo, when, if never as rich and aristocratic and beautiful as Miss Warner, Theo had been a very dear friend—very dear, indeed, of handsome Clarimond.

And Theo could not but acknowledge it, he had been very good and kind to her still, advising and cheering and consoling her often of late, for he had his own pressing business duties, and Theo had drifted out of his way much these last months—so much, so far, that she had learned how very dear he had made himself to her.

"But he does not know I care, he would not think me such a fool.

"I will forget him! I will forget him!" she had said to herself scores of times that dreary summer, while she was honestly, pitifully trying to perform that most impossible of tasks—forgetting the old love of her woman's true heart.

Then that letter from Miss Warner had come, offering her the position that would place her in such comfort, and put an end to her pathetic little economies, her heart-breaking little endurings.

It was no childish struggle which tossed her between pride and pity for herself; and finally, the womanhood in her rose grandly victorious, for all she was pale and wet-eyed, and trembling when she put on her little cloak and hat and gloves, an hour afterwards, to personally accept Miss Warner's offer.

Yet not even Miss Warner, who had manœuvred, no one would ever know how or how much, to secure Theo Lansing's personal services; not even her sharp, lovely eyes detected a trace of the recent turmoil, when Theo sat before her listening to her sweet, languid tones, and understanding how Forrest Clarimond could not help loving such a beauty, so elegant and dainty.

While Antoinette Warner, scrutinizing Theo's pale, sweet face, with the pure, shadowy eyes, the gracious brow, white as milk, the tender, dainty mouth, the slender, lissom figure, told herself she had done well in getting this charming girl to enter her services as a servant on wages, placing her beyond the line over which it was impossible for one of the haughty, rich, exclusive Clarimonds to lower himself by crossing, even for the sake of the girl's sweet beauty.

The bargain was made, and underneath every word that was spoken in her offer by Antoinette Warner, was the refrain:

"I will win Forrest Clarimond if I possibly can."

And in Theo's little heart was the pitiful prayer:

"Oh, Heaven make me forget him!"

So their lives closed in together that dismal day, the third of December, and outwardly there was more comfort and rest to Theo than she had known since she had had her father's arm to lean upon.

One day, just a week after Theo had been there Miss Warner summoned her suddenly to the dining-room one evening, and as she entered, with the quiet ease and grace of a child, Mr. Clarimond came forward to meet her, genuinely pleased, wholly unembarrassed.

"Theo, you did not expect to see me, did you?

"I was prepared for you, however, for Miss Warner told me last evening you were here.

"I am glad, Theo, for it is a good home for you, and Miss Warner a desirable friend."

Theo gave him her hand as he extended his own.

One cruel throb of her heart, one instantaneous flash of color to her cheeks, and then a quiet, reserved greeting that made Miss Warner clench her teeth in rage.

Then she smiled sweetly.

"You will excuse me, Theodora, but Perkins just sent word he was ill and could not attend at dinner, and I am obliged to ask you and Bessie to wait at table.

"You do not decline?"

For a second Theo's face was cruelly pale, and her lovely little head crested like a queen's, while Antoinette watched her with secret rejoicing and malice veiled beneath her gracious manner and speech.

Then Theo bowed.

"If you desire it, I will wait at table, Miss Warner."

And all through the long, tedious dinner, from soup to ices, she performed the duty of a trained waitress, never once faltering in her task, never once shrinking, never once speaking, never once looking at Miss Warner or Mr. Warner, or Mr. Clarimond.

And then, when released, flying to her room, and locking herself in, and sobbing

and weeping her heart out for the shame she knew Antoinette Warner had deliberately heaped upon her.

"I cannot endure it—I cannot endure it!" she moaned.

At the same moment, pacing up and down the splendid parlors, Antoinette Warner's face was dark and venomous.

"I am afraid that it was not good management.

"I am afraid Clarimond understood that I meant to humiliate her!

"Well, I did!

"I'll stamp her into the very gutter before he shall have her!

"He may mean to marry her now, but when I have done with her he would not dare."

While riding away Forrest Clarimond's thoughts were strangely mixed.

"Poor little Theo—brave little girl!"

"I shall never forget while I live the courage in her white face as she obeyed Antoinette's cruel orders.

"She has found a shelter, enough to eat and drink, and she will receive prompt, good pay, but——"

The days went on, and the hopefullest, happiest time of all the year came—Christmas Eve—hopeful and happy to everyone in that grand house; everybody but little Theo; this true, passion-heartsp girl.

So many memories came thrilling around her heart, as memories only come on such times; but, above and beyond all, deeper and bitterer than even grief for the dead, was her hopeless agony because of Forrest Clarimond.

She had not seen him since the night of her humiliation.

A thousand times had his name been spoken in her presence, each mention a heart stab, never less keen than the time before.

Sitting alone in her pleasant little room that Christmas Eve, her duties done until Miss Warner rung to be dressed for the evening, Theo was thinking that prayer, and struggle, and desperate determination were but as feathers in the weight of a love that would not be crushed.

"Peace and good will," she said bitterly, while the forlorn tears rose slowly to her eyes. "It is not true, there is no such thing—'peace'—I would die to be at peace!

"If I dared—if I dared—the sound of the chimes which will ring so soon should not mock my living ears—oh, Heaven, forgive me—I am mad!

"I will be patient.

"I will—I will endure!"

Her head was drooped forward on the little table near hear, and her hands clasped in sharp agitation, and right into that soul agony, that soul wrestling for victory, came the loud ring of Miss Warner's bell, Theo's call to everyday life and its duties again.

Miss Warner beamed with unwonted graciousness upon her as she entered, a trifle paler, her step a little slower, her eyes bigger and darker in their velvety greyness.

"Aren't they lovely, Theodora?

"Come, look at them!

"I am to have my choice for a Christmas present from Mr. Clarimond."

Theo felt as though a blasting light had blinded her soul, at Miss Warner's words, at Forrest Clarimond's dear name, even as her physical sense was dazzled by the splendid sparkle of the three serpent rings lying on a tiny azure velvet cushion, each so magnificent that choice seemed as unnecessary as impossible.

Rings, solitaires, for Miss Warner, from Mr. Clarimond!

It could mean but one thing for Theo—despair unutterable, which seemed all the more mysteriously strange because she had no help for it.

Miss Warner looked at her as she bent over them, in apparent admiration, really to hide the look she felt must be in her face.

"They are very handsome," she said presently.

"Mr. Clairmond has such exquisite taste," Miss Warner said, lifting the glittering cushion and carelessly letting it fall.

"Ah, I have dropped them—under the escritoire I saw them roll.

"Here is one," she said, as one of them rolled to her foot, "please pick up the other two, Theodora."

Theo dropped to her knees in search.

"Here is another," she said, handing it to Miss Warner, who took it, and twisted it admiringly.

"I do not see the other one.

"But it's there, somewhere, of course—perhaps it rolled yonder."

Theo looked intently, here, there everywhere.

"I cannot find it," she said, presently.

"Nonsense!

"It is there, of course," and then, as Theo arose, her face flushed from long stooping, "unless you do not wish to find it."

Theo straightened instantly.

"Miss Warner!" she said indignantly, her lips trembling.

"Where is it, then?

"You and I are alone, I dropped the rings, I have found two, you have been down there searching, where is it?

"It could not fly, or disappear.

"Where is it?

"Return it to me, and I will say nothing of it."

For a second Theo stood like a statue, her grey eyes black as night with flashing indignation.

"How—how dare you bring such an infamous accusation against me—me?

"Do you not understand it would be impossible, impossible for me to—to steal?

Miss Warner laughed.

"I prefer common sense to high tragedy, Theodora.

"Of course, you deny it—very grandly, but, the ring must be found, and I advise you to find it before I report to Mr. Clarimond."

Ah! report to Mr. Clarimond that she—she, Theo Lansing, had stolen a betrothal ring from his future bride!

Her lips grew pale at the shame, the anguish, and she swayed as though she were about to fall.

Miss Warner's cold voice arrested the outflowing tide of wounded consciousness.

"Pray don't make a sensation—I'll leave you fifteen minutes, and I promise to make no accusation, if, when I return, you give me the ring."

"Allow me to offer a slightly different mode of procedure," Forrest Clarimond said calmly, stepping in from the boudoir.

"Miss Warner, I fear you have made at least two mistakes during the last ten minutes.

"In the first place, the diamonds were to be a gift from your father—by no means from me.

"Again, if you will carefully search that little watch-pocket in your dress, I am quite sure you will find your memory refreshed—you dropped the ring in there when you picked two off the floor, instead of one."

Antoinette sat down, livid and speechless, while Theo, her great eyes dilating, still stared, like a beautiful statue, conscious of some rare, matchless ecstasy flooding her like a glimpse of heavenly glory.

"It is too bad, Theo, that this should have happened, this night of all nights.

"But it will never happen again, dear; because I shall take you home with me tonight, never to let you go again.

"My mother is waiting to welcome you—and if you will listen to my story, which I will tell you by-and-by, there will be a betrothal ring on your finger before you listen to the Christmas bells.

"Come, Theo, Miss Warner does not require you further, and when you are my wife, Mrs. Clarimond will dispense with Miss Warner's acquaintance.

"Come, dear."

And before Theo heard the midnight chimes she had prayed for forgiveness at her repining, and into her heart, forever at "peace" now, came the twin sister of sacred peace—love assured.

And never a more blessed woman breathed than Theo, when she shyly whispered the next morning to her lover "Merry Christmas!"

What Might Have Been.

BY L. H. W.

ISN'T it lovely?" Nettie Long asked, as she held up a trailing, bronze-hued satin dress for her husband's admiration one morning, three days before the coming of the New Year.

"Very lovely," the man answered, in a tone less enthusiastic than Nettie's had been.

"You ain't glad a bit," the girl said pettishly.

"I am very glad, Nettie," he replied quietly, with a voice which still had a suspicion of weariness in it.

"It is lovely," she repeated, "and I only want one thing to make my toilet New Year's day complete.

"I have the sweetest crimson roses for my throat and belt, and all I need is a duchesse lace barbe.

"I saw a beauty to-day at Macintosh's for twenty-five dollars."

"I am afraid you will have to do without it, dear.

"I have exhausted my last month's salary.

"I cannot give you the money."

"Never mind, Walter; draw your next month's salary to-day, and give me my allowance and I will get the barbe with that, and have the meat and groceries charged for two or three weeks."

"I would not mind drawing my salary a few days before it is due, though you know I do not like to do so, but I could never consent to your running in debt to purchase an article you do not need; and the coal bill I promised on the second of January will take all the surplus funds I might otherwise spare you."

"But I do need it, Walter.

"One would think you would like your wife to look her prettiest on New Year's Day.

"Let the coal-dealer wait another month," she said, coaxingly.

"I am sorry you have so little principle.

"I cannot be dishonest even to gratify you.

"Really you must do without it," he replied.

"I cannot see how making one's coal-dealer wait a few weeks is dishonest, but even if it were, it is no worse than meanness and stinginess!

"I——"

"Nettie, take care!" he interrupted; "you rouse the demon in me.

"You know I give you all I have.

"We are spending every dollar of our income as fast as we receive it, when, now in our youth, we ought to be self-denying and economical, and save something in case of trouble or ill-health!

"Come, Nettie, be reasonable," he said, his voice changing from passionate anger to gentle entreaty; "your friends will think you quite as charming without the coveted lace as with it, and would certainly respect you more if they knew the circumstances."

And he kissed her pretty pouting lips, and went to his business, grieved and anxious at his wife's apparent lack of principle, yet revolving in his mind how he might purchase for her that which she so coveted.

* * * * * * *

It was New Year's Eve, and Mrs. Long attired for the opera, waited by the yellow light of the grate fire in their cosy parlor for her lord to finish his toilette.

It was late, and she could hear the sound of his footsteps as he went to a fro in the room above, and once she started to call him, but took her seat again, exclaiming angrily:

"No, he is always late; let him take his time; I don't care!"

But when the bronze clock on the mantle struck eight she opened the door, and called impatiently:

"Walter, are you never coming?"

No voice answered her, but five minutes later her husband entered the parlor, attired for the opera.

In her anger she would not turn and greet him, but when he softly crossed the room and stood before her, and she was compelled to glance up to him, her face whitened to the very lips.

He was without shoes or stockings.

He wore neither coat nor vest, and his white shirt hung sleeveless about him.

Around his head, so as to conceal all but the wild eyes, from which the light of reason had departed, was gathered his white merino vest; one hand held this tightly, while the other clasped Nettie's white opera shawl, which in her haste she had forgotten.

"Walter! Walter!" she cried in terror, "what is the matter?"

"We're going to get the—the—scarf, you know.

"I couldn't get it before; don't scold!" he said piteously.

"My darling!

"Oh, my darling!" wailed Nettie's white lips, as she took him tenderly and unresistingly in her arms and dragged him upstairs and into their pretty bridal-room, and placed him in an easy-chair, the only piece of furniture in the room which was empty.

Ringing a bell, Mrs. Long summoned their one servant and bade her go quickly for a physician.

Upon the chairs, the floor, the bed, were scattered every article of clothing which the closet had contained.

Her husband's shaving materials lay on the bureau.

Nettie shuddered as she noticed the open razor and the great gashes in the pale-blue satin pin-cushion.

What if, while she sat there so wickedly impatient for his coming, he had never come at all?

And that he should have come to her thus!

Her tears fell like rain as she laid away the garments he might never wear again, and gently placed him on his couch.

Her sobs troubled him, for he said:

"Nettie, darling, don't cry.

"I couldn't get the scarf, you know; I'll go now and get it."

She checked her tears, and soothed him with tender words, and bathed his throbbing forehead, and lulled him to sleep, and sitting there, holding his feverish hand, thought remorsefully of all his kindness to her since, less than a year before, he had brought her, a penniless, orphan shop-girl, to this prettily-furnished cottage home, and by and by, after what seemed to her an eternity, the doctor came.

He felt the fevered pulse, inquired carefully when and how the symptoms first appeared, looked wise and thoughtful, wrote two prescriptions, gave directions concerning them, and left.

Two days later the end came.

Nettie's husband, the one love of her youth, closed his eyes and drifted away from her.

And his last words had been:

"Nettie, darling, I'll get the scarf in the morning."

And this loving but erring bride, so early widowed, knelt beside him in an agony of grief, which only those can know who have wronged the one they loved dearest on earth, and it is too late for regret or forgiveness.

* * * * * * * *

"Nettie, little wife—asleep!

"Wake up and look at this barbe I——"

Nettie sprang from the Turkish lounge, threw her arms around her husband's neck and covered his lips with kisses, while tears of joy and thanksgiving and repentance filled her eyes.

"What is it, dear?" Walter asked, seeing her so moved.

"Oh, I dreamed!"

And once more she clasped him convulsively.

Then she told him something of her agonizing vision.

He took her in his arms and kissed away her tears, and soothed her agitation, and told her how the mining stocks which he had held so long having that day declared a dividend, he was enabled to afford the barbe, and had gone himself and purchased it for her as a New Year's gift.

"Oh, how good you are!

"I am not half worthy of you, Walter. I shall not wear the barbe New Year's Day though, as a punishment for my selfishness and cruel words to you!"

And she folded tenderly the dainty lace and laid it aside, as we put away the precious things of the beloved dead.

She would have her way.

And on New Year's Day, attired in her bronze-hued satin dress, with only the crimson roses at her throat and belt, she had never looked so beautiful to the fond husband who watched her proudly as she welcomed their friends with sweetness and grace.

And thus the demon which had threatened their home and happiness was frightened away for ever.

Scientific and Useful.

TREE GROWING.—Ninety-three thousand acres of trees have been planted under the new Arboriculture act in Kansas. Unfortunately preference has been given, because of its rapid growth, to the cotton tree, which in every respect is as worthless as the mullein stalk.

AN ELECTRIC TRICYCLE.—According to *The Electrician* the improvement in the storage of electric energy and in electromotors have so far advanced that tricycles can not only be lighted, but also propelled, solely by electricity. This feat was accomplished the other day. The Faure accumulators in which the energy was stored for the lighting and drawing were placed on the footboard of the tricycle, and the motion was produced by newly patented electromotors placed under the seat of the rider. Using one of these specially made tricycle electromotors and the newest type of the Faure accumulators, the total dead weight to be added to a tricycle to light and propel it electrically is only one and a half hundred-weight, a little more than that of one additional person.

HOUSE WARMING.—A Boston man has devised an ingenious arrangement for utilizing the heat in the sun's rays in warming houses. His invention consists of a surface of blackened slate under glass, fixed to the sunny side or sides of a house, with vents in the walls so arranged that the cold air of a room is let out at the bottom of the slate and forced in again at the top by the ascending heat column between the slate and the glass. The out-door air can be admitted also if desirable. The thing is simple, and its entire practicableness has been demonstrated. The value of the improvement for daily warming buildings like churches and school house which when allowed to get cold between using, consume immense quantities of heat before they are fairly warmed again, is evident. Of course any other means of heating is available when the sun does not shine.

STOPPING ENGINES.—The manager of some large woollen mills in England, has devised a method for stopping steam engines by the electric current in case of a breakdown of machinery or other accident in factories, or in the event of an impending collision on board steamship. The apparatus consists mainly of a weighted suspension rod, an ordinary battery, an electro-magnet and conducting wires leading to any number of points from which it is desired the engine shall be controlled. The electro-magnet is placed in a small box at the top of the stopping apparatus, which is connected with the stop-valve of the engine. Should an accident occur to the machinery in any part of the factory where the electric push is fixed, upon the button's being pressed and contact made the electro-magnet acts upon a lever, which releases the weighted suspension rod. This rod instantly descends by gravity, and in its descent it opens a three-way cock, by which means steam is admitted from the boiler to a cylinder containing a piston, which latter is raised, and, in raising, closes the stop-valve and shuts off the steam.

Farm and Garden.

SCIDERS.—When these infest house plants sponging the leaves on both sides and syringing the plants so that the water is thrown on the under as well as upper sides of the leaves, will be effectual.

CORN.—Steeping corn in strong solution of salt-petre twenty-four to forty-eight hours before planting is said to be a protection against mice, squirrels and worms. Coppers in strong solution is also recommended. As protection against worms mix half a pint of boiling tar to each peck of corn; stir briskly.

CORN-STALK FUEL.—An Iowa farmer, who has both coal and wood on his farm, warms his house with corn-stalks, and claims that they make the best and cheapest fuel he can get. He uses a large stove, and burns the stalks in tightly bound bundles, weighing about forty pounds each. A bundle burns three hours (without fussing) in an air-tight stove. The large stove offers so much radiating surface that it does not need to be very hot. Five bundles a day, or 600 for the winter, suffice to keep the stove going and the room warm.

LILIES.—A ten-inch pot is not too large for a lily bulb. The bulb should be planted deep, having an inch or an inch and a half of soil over the very top of it, and it is better that the top soil be lighter than the rest, to allow the stem to push through easily. When filled, the soil should be an inch below the top of the rim of the pot, to allow for watering. The potted bulbs are to be set away in the cellar, the same as already described, but it will be much longer before they are ready to bring out; this will be in the spring, when they show the green stem pushed up out of the soil.

FROZEN PLANTS.—When plants are found to be frozen, make the change to a higher temperature very gradual. Remove them to a room where the air is but a few degrees above freezing, or if this can not be done, warm up the room where they are, but very gradually. In moving frozen plants it must be done with great care, as in their frozen state they may be readily injured. Sometimes the newer shoots will fail to recover, while the leaves of the older wood will resume their natural condition. When this occurs all those parts that fail to recover should be removed—cutting back with a sharp knife to a sound portion of the stem.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-SECOND YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 30, 1882.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

(Lock Box 5.) 720 Sansom St., Phila., Pa.

THE SEASON OF JOY.

If for a moment we could presume there was one person in the Christian world who did not know what Christmas was, and inquired, the mind and tongue replying would be more than apt to skip ordinary considerations, and say: It is everything. With usual holidays we associate persons, or things. The celebration is generally devoted to the glory of a sentiment, and is no sooner over than forgotten. But Christmas is the holy centre to which tend all the roads of the year; the temple where all come at once to worship, the golden cord which holds strung upon it like diamond beads, the best virtues of the human heart. The day may change, and be succeeded by others, but there are always pictures hung up in the chambers of memory that no dust of time can ever hide from view. Plunged deep in the whirl of daily affairs; anxious to secure what earth holds out to those who work and struggle, they may apparently lose something of their early freshness and lustre. But slowly with the dying leaves, and the first snows of winter, they reveal themselves in all brightness to the mental eye, even fairer than before. And what a glorious blessing it is that in so gazing, the wish comes to our hearts and to our hands, that so far as we are able, we too will become artists and paint such pictures that, hanging in others' memories, may make them glad in Christmasses to come, but which we may never see! With charity and kindness as colors, and good-will to aid their workings, the angels at such a time might well envy the graces the humblest and poorest have in their gift. He is called great who writes his life in memorial brass, but he is far greater who writes his works in those deeds of love that at this golden season show the old spirit of peace and good-will prevails, and that man bears some traces of his Maker after all.

SANCTUM CHAT.

A CELEBRATED beauty, whose complexion at sixty was fresher than that of our women at thirty, told her secret recently, and it was divided into two parts: First—She never used washrag or towel on her face, but washed it with her hands, rinsing it off with a soft sponge. She used clear water in the morning, but white castile soap or very warm water at night, and, after drying it on a soft towel, she would take a flesh-brush and rub her cheeks, chin and forehead. Second, if she was going to be up late at night, she always slept as many hours in the day as she expected to be awake beyond the usual time.

—

THE frequency of divorces in New England probably comes of an over-supply of literary culture, and an under-supply of domesticity—they are too literary and too stingy. There is not enough variety among them—too much sameness of novels in the library and of boiled beans in the kitchen. It is not in human nature to stand so much of George Eliot along with so little to eat. Who ever heard of a man getting a divorce from a Pennsylvania girl—one knowing the mystery of fried chickens and waffles? or from an Ohio, Kentucky, or Indiana girl, who understands the true inwardness of hot corn-bread and fresh butter? or from any of their daughters in Missouri, Iowa, or anywhere in the northwest?

—

ALL great singers do not despise simple music. Nilsson is one of the exceptions. "It must not be supposed," she said to the Philadelphia *Times*, "that simple ballads are the easiest tasks which fall to the singer's lot. I may say that I sing them from choice, because I love them. No lyric poetry gives me a greater pleasure than the melodies of Thomas Moore, the ditties of Robert Burns, and the many simple, touching ballads of nameless authors that live in English homes. I regret that there are so few genuinely excellent modern balads, although there is much that delights me in some of Sullivan's. English and American audiences are alike fond, I find, of this simple music. After all, there is not much difference between the peoples."

—

THERE is a peculiar form of nervousness that leads a man to suppose himself seriously ill, when, in reality, he is only more nervous than usual. He flies to a physician for relief, and often ends by persuading himself into a severe illness. The fact is, nervous people waste a good deal of money, confidence and worry on their nervousness. A man with a Roman nose may just as well bewail his incapacity to change his organ into Grecian outline as for nervous people to lament that they cannot discharge nervousness from their physical organization. It cannot be expelled. It is there to stay. But self-control and self-restraint will do much towards obviating the evil, and are more efficacious than the attendance of any physician.

—

THE negroes on the Southern plantations used, it is related, to cut in twain a pumpkin, and dry the parts until they were hard and sonorous. Then they would affix an arm to one hemisphere of the pumpkin, draw strings across it, tune them to the proper key, and pick them to the measures of their melodies. That was long ago, but not so long that the tradition of the rude instrument has been lost. The banjo of to-day takes the part of the pumpkin gourd in the negro delineations, but the instrument itself is as old well nigh as the hills. In the imperial tombs in the Pyramids it was found in its primitive form, which showed that the ancient Egyptians drew from its chords an accompaniment to their airs.

—

So prevalent is the habit of talking small nonsense in company, that even thinking people mask their intelligence by its use. But let some one person bring a sensible topic of conversation forward, and it is wonderful how soon he will be surrounded by others, well-informed concerning it, and anxious to diffuse their knowledge. The trouble is, we do not understand each other. Men have become thoroughly impressed with the idea that in order to make themselves agreeable they must keep up a constant stream of nonsense and silly utterances, and the ladies seem to have formed the same idea in regard to the gentlemen, until out of this mutual misunderstanding has grown this empty, meaningless jargon of words at almost every social entertainment—a short shower of soap-bubbles.

—

AN enterprising dealer in lithographed sermons is advertising in the English papers that he has two discourses now ready for the late harvest, embodying some practical reflections upon current events; and he further announces that, in view of the day of thanksgiving for the late speedy and signal victory in Egypt, he has prepared two discourses for the occasion. We suppose that so long as men are allowed to buy themselves livings, the trade of the sermonmonger will flourish; but what must be the ideal morality entertained by a clergyman who week after week will stand up in his pulpit and read as his own that which is the work of another man, and who is induced to purchase these clerical wares by the precautions taken against being found out?

—

SIEMENS, the electrician, believes that the contest between gas and electricity will end in the latter winning the day as the light of luxury; but that gas will nevertheless find an increasing application for the more humble purposes of society. He strongly urges again the use of gas as the cheapest form of fuel for towns, and of making a general supply of heating-gas besides illuminating gas, by collecting each into separate holders while the process of distillation is going on. The result would, he says, be this: 1. Lighting gas would have a higher illuminating power. 2. There would be no coal to distribute or ashes to collect over town. 3. The smoke nuisance would be abated. 4. There would be a large increase of those valuable by-products—tar, coke, ammonia, etc., the annual value of which already exceeds by nearly $15,000,000 that of the coal consumed in the gas-works.

—

SOMETHING should be the result of the labors of the commission created in France to determine the best methods for the hygiene of school children. To begin with, too much is expected of school children. For the sake of amusement a compiler one evening tried to calculate the time needed to obtain a working mastery of the various subjects which lecturers and others insisted "ought to be taught in schools," and he was forced to the very moderate estimate that the period required to fulfil the obligations would extend the school age to at least 50 years! And again, what terribly ponderous trash the poor little ones have to commit to memory one only learns after looking over some of our own and foreign text-books in use in the common schools. It is high time that the over-taxation of energy and the misdirection of effort on the part of the young should receive the serious consideration of every civilized nation in the world. There are other serious evils—badly-lighted and badly-ventilated schools.

—

A CHICAGO preacher, in a recent sermon, said that he did not believe in the saying, "God made the country, the man made the town." Humanity's greatest possibilities were shown in the city. There the sinful propensities exhibited themselves in the strongest light. In the country a sinful nature, like an isolated firebrand, soon burned out and was comparatively harmless. In the city these human firebrands were placed so closely together that the fire of each fed that of the other, and as a consequence the evil in human nature reached its intensest manifestation. But, on the other hand, it was in the large cities where the noblest impulses of the heart showed themselves in the greatest degree. The greatest reformatory movements the world has known originated with, and were fostered by, those whose lives have developed in the intensity of city life.

—

FOR distant communication in time of war, when other means of conveying intelligence to an intercepted body of troops are rendered impracticable by the enemy, the following method, due to the genius of a French inventor, may prove of great service at night: A small, captive, translucent balloon, containing an incandescent lamp to which electricity is conveyed by suitable means, is elevated by hydrogen gas to any required height. By interrupting the current at certain intervals messages may be conveyed to the remote observers in the Morse or any other convenient alphabet. In time of peace, when a shipwreck has occurred, or when a flood has isolated and endangered the lives of those living in towns situated in river basins, this system of telegraphing may sometimes prove useful after the force of the wind has abated.

—

SINCE 1867 over seven hundred thousand emigrants have left the United States; but this represents less than last year's arrivals of immigrants. In the number of arrivals we passed two hundred thousand in 1847, three hundred thousand in 1850, and four hundred thousand in 1854. The number then fell off rapidly, getting as low as 91,000 in 1861-2; but by the close of the war it reached a quarter of a million per annum, and in 1867 again passed 300,000. The numbers increased year by year until they reached 473,000 in 1873; then the panic and hard times retarded immigration, the number of arrivals falling gradually to as low as 165,000 in 1877. In 1880 a fresh start was taken with nearly half a million arrivals, which was increased to 394,000 in 1881, and to 816,292 for the year ending June 30, 1882. Of this latter number 778,992 were immigrants who came to stay.

—

THE total export trade of the United States has never yet reached one thousand millions of dollars. In 1881 it was only seven hundred and fifty millions of dollars, but in the two previous years our total exports were over eight hundred millions per annum. Vast as these figures appear to be, they seem small when compared with the returns of our domestic commerce. The business of our railroads, lakes, rivers and canals foots up some thirty-five thousand millions of dollars annually; that is to say, for every dollar engaged in the foreign trade of the country there are from thirty-five to forty employed in our interstate commerce. The coming year we will probably ship abroad nearly three hundred millions of breadstuffs, and about the same amount of cotton; but we shall send abroad less beef and pork than we have done for the last two years. It is estimated that we shall have a crop of five hundred and seventy million bushels of wheat, of which something more than half will be consumed in the country; but our corn crop, while it will exceed that of last year, will not be equal to the crops of 1879-80.

PRESENT AND PAST.

BY EDWARD M. SHINN.

I love to greet old Christmas,
When the rime is on the bough,
With his coronet of holly
And the berries on his brow.
What though the clinging icicles
Hang on his beard of snow,
They'll vanish in a twinkling
Before the yule log's glow.

I love to greet old Christmas
When snow lies thick without,
Or old King Frost comes nipping
And biting all about;
For then the ringing laughter
Falls pleasant on the ear,
And old friends gather round us
To taste the season's cheer.

I love to greet old Christmas,
If not for present joy,
At least for recollections
That come without alloy.
A thousand hallowed memories
Around his form are cast;
They link the sober present
To the seasons that are past.

Grandma's Dress.

BY L. W.

I HAD always known Grandpa Grey to be a stern, unreasonable man, and had also known, in a vague way, that some sort of trouble existed between him and grandma.

Grandma wore so sad a face that I learned childishly to imagine that grandmas were always sad.

Grandpa occasionally smiled, but not often enough to attract my fancy, and I learned to avoid him.

Things had continued to grow worse between the two, until at last, when mamma died, and I, then orphaned utterly, went to live at the Homestead, I did my best to be a comfort to them both, so far as one of my impulsive nature could be "a comfort" to anybody.

I was fifteen years old when I became one of the family there, and now my eighteenth birthday had just passed.

Grandpa was sixty-nine years old, and grandma two years younger.

I think nobody outside our circle of immediate friends knew of the skeleton in our closet, since both my grandparents were proud, reserved people, and before strangers a show of cordial feeling was invariably sustained by the husband and wife.

How long this unhappiness between the two had lasted, and when it would end, I did not know; but I was glad to escape as much of the gloom as I could, by accepting neighboring invitations here and there among a set of gay, merry friends who did their kindest to make me like themselves.

I used to talk of mamma to grandma sometimes, and indulge in a sort of mother-sick cry, which comforted and eased my heart after a fashion; but when I would speak of grandpa, asking a question or two, grandma invariably stopped me with the pressure of her hand upon my lips.

So now I had given the conundrum up entirely, and had grown used to the queer state of things in my only home.

Not long after my seventeenth birthday I met Jack Spencer.

It was at a neighbor's house, and I've no doubt that the meeting was planned by the warm-hearted but match-making lady who always insisted that I was her special charge, and just the kind of girl her young friend would admire, if he only had a chance to meet me.

Whether she had written to Jack in that strain I don't know, but certainly, when we did meet, I felt the hot blushes running over my cheeks, and up under the short curls on my forehead, and am quite certain that he, although he has never confessed as much, felt the same confusion.

It did not take very long for us both to gratify most willingly our kind old friend's desire, for two more love-sick people than Jack and I became after a month's acquaintance would be hard to find.

Our engagement was satisfactory to everybody save grandpa, and he utterly and sternly forbade the mention of any such folly.

In vain Jack called on grandpa, arguing his case, and pleading his cause manfully.

The old gentleman simply looked at my handsome lover through his spectacles, and gave a kind of contemptuous grunt very aggravating to Jack, and to me, listening at the library door.

"I think," he said to me afterwards, "that a fellow who stands six feet two in his stocking-feet ought hardly to be treated so."

And I answered indignantly—

"Of course not, Jack: it is too bad for grandpa to act so hatefully!"

Then, because we were both boiling over with rage, all the more because we were so helpless against grandpa's will—for I would not consent to elope with Jack,—we went off by ourselves and comforted each other after the most approved fashion.

So things had gone on for all that year, and now Jack began to grow impatient for the wedding.

He came to the house one afternoon full of plans he had been making—as he said—all the night before, and insisted that grandpa must be brought to terms in some way.

I had humored every fancy of his with the greatest care and alacrity; in fact, I do believe I had never been so obedient to the dear, cross old grandpa in my life before.

But, after all my efforts, things looked cloudy for Jack and me as we sat side by side in the parlor that particular afternoon, while I listened to his plans.

How temptingly he pictured the cosy future home for us both, and how impatient I grew for a time when those glowing anticipations might be realized!

Then, after awhile, I left him sitting there, and went up to grandpa for one more talk, and an effort to bring Jack and him together in harmony.

First I coaxed, and then I talked with all the dignity I could muster.

Then I grew angry, and finally I burst into tears, regardless of the fact that a red nose, red eyes and swollen lips were not in the least becoming to me, and that I should have to go down to Jack in that condition.

Grandpa was like a rock.

He had taken a dislike to Jack, and because I would not give him up, when we loved each other so that the world seemed a different place since we had met, that dislike had only increased and set itself against us both, in spite of the love grandpa had felt for me before.

Becoming finally convinced that no amount of pleading or weeping would move his stony heart, I flounced out of the room, bumped against grandma, who was passing through the hall, and nearly knocked her over.

But she knew my trouble, and her dear old arms were around me in a moment.

She kissed my quivering lips, and whispered—

"Never mind, dearie: maybe it will come out right one of these days.

"Grandma loves her darling, doesn't she?"

Oh, how I hugged the dear slender form, and laid my wet eyes against the wrinkled face!

Then I flew down the stairs, and found Jack pacing the floor like a caged lion.

"Well, Edie?"

"Only the same old story, Jack," I replied.

"He won't even admit that I am engaged to you.

"Oh, dear, I've half a mind to run away with you after all, only dear, old, patient grandma would die now if I left her, for I know grandpa would never let me come back again."

Jack looked doleful.

Then he fixed his eyes upon my face.

The parlor was dark, but I knew he was looking at my red and swollen nose, and I said—

"Yes, I have been crying, Jack—of course I have, and I know I look like a fright!

"But I don't care.

"Jack, do you know all this worry is making me sick and nervous?

"And by-and-by you'll want to give me up, I'm sure, for I shall be in a chronic state of red eyes and nose."

He laughed in spite of his annoyance.

"See here, sis," said Jack, "if your grandfather imagines I ever will give you up, he never was more mistaken about a thing.

"I'm not that kind of a fellow, am I?

"I'll never give you up, you poor little darling, and I'll wait for you ten years if need be; or until the old gentleman gets sick and—and doesn't recover — that's all."

I withdrew from Jack's arm and exclaimed—

"Why, Jack Spencer, that is downright wicked!"

I might have said more, but Jack took me again in his arms, and further speech was too muffled to be understood.

"I'll tell you this, Edie," said he, "it's deucedly lucky your grandfather isn't a fellow of my size—that's all.

"Confound him—it, I mean!

"Excuse me, I don't mean any disrespect.

"I'd fight him with impunity then, you know."

"Yes," interrupted I, "only he wouldn't be my grandfather then, and—and I'm afraid you would be too small an infant to fight for anything but a rattle.

"Don't talk nonsense, Jack!

"Let us consider that it is a blessing we can at least be engaged, if we can't be married as soon as we would.

"If mamma were here now, I should not be so troubled."

Here I began to cry again, but Jack comforted me after a fashion of his own, which somehow never failed.

After he left me, just at dark, I went up to grandma's room.

She had been reading, but the book was lying upon her knee, and I saw by the glow of the fire that there were tears in her dear grey eyes.

What a pretty old lady she was!

And mamma had often told me that all grandma's friends used to say there had never been a prettier girl than Eunice Hope in the town where she had passed her girlhood.

She laid her hand upon my head.

"Well, dearie?"

"Nothing, grandma, only that grandpa is so hateful and unreas——"

She laid her hand on my lips.

"Sh, child!

"Remember of whom you speak.

"He is your dear mother's father, and your grandfather, dear."

"Yes, I know.

"But, grandma, did mamma love grandpa?"

"Certainly, dearie, dearly.

"He loved her, and he loved me then."

The grey eyes looked wistfully into the firelight and the hand on my head trembled.

"Oh, grandma," I exclaimed, "how can you care about a man who treats you as he does?

"Just think, he hasn't spoken to you for years, and I don't imagine he cares for you now at all.

"How you can be so patient passes my understanding."

"You can't judge of the thing at all, darling" she said, with the ghost of a smile on her lips.

"Because, you see, you are Edie, and not grandma.

"We loved each other once.

"I think he loves his wife even now.

"But pride, Edie, is very hard to put aside, and grandpa has a goodly heritage of family obstinacy to contend with.

"I try to remember that and be patient, though I often fail."

"You are everything that is sweet and patient all the time, grandma dear," I replied, as her voice died away in a sigh low and inexpressibly sad.

"Do you know, if it were not for the dread of leaving you alone with only the housekeeper and cross old grandpa, I would make believe I were a novel heroine and—elope with my Jack?

"I love him very much, grandma, and we want to marry after our long engagement, you know."

"Patience, dearie," said grandma; "behind the clouds the sun is still shining, you know."

"Yes, I'm going to be patient a little longer, grandma, and then, if grandpa won't let me have a pleasant wedding here with you all, why, there'll be a runaway affair, you'll see."

"There, that will do, Edie; you are talking yourself into a fever, dear, and so uselessly too.

"Tell me about that fancy dress party you are invited to next week.

"Have you decided about your character?"

"It is just what I want your advice about, grandma," I said, "my choice of a character.

"Gracie Harding declares I should go as a gipsy, because I am so tawny-skinned, and have dark eyes.

"But my hair is too light, you see, and I thought I might have it dyed for that night."

"Edie! dye this beautiful gold-brown hair?

"Why, child, that I forbid on the spot!" passing her fingers lovingly through the mass I had unpinned and allowed to fall over my shoulders.

"Well, then, what character can I take, grandma?" I asked, quite willing not to be a gipsy, since, after all, I might array myself more becomingly.

You see, I was not without my share of a woman's vanity.

"Oh, may I go to the garret to-morrow and hunt over your old hair trunk there?

"Maybe I'll find something ridiculous to disguise myself in?"

Grandma laughingly consented, and at that moment the tea-bell rang.

Grandpa had a touch of rheumatism, and was to be served in his room, so grandma and I went down alone to the table; but I noticed that she arranged a tray of dainties for the absent one as carefully as though her whole heart were in the task, and I did not think he deserved it in the least.

The fancy party was to come off on Christmas Eve, and Jack and I had been sleighing all that afternoon, until, just before dark, we turned towards home, that I might have plenty of time for dressing.

"And you are determined not to tell me what your character is to be, Edie?" asked Jack coaxingly, as we neared the house.

"No, because I want to surprise you.

"Grandma doesn't even know, although she is as curious as you are, sir."

Then we parted, and I went up to grandpa's room, to give him, in advance of Christmas morning, a present from Jack, which was nothing more nor less than a stout, gold-headed cane, on which was inscribed in plain letters—

"GRANDPA,
"From his affectionate grandson,
"JACK SPENCER."

I will confess that I trembled when I put the cane in the old man's hands, and without a word withdrew, while grandpa was adjusting his glasses for a close examination of the gift he supposed to be mine.

I waited outside the door long enough to hear that cane strike bang against it, accompanied by the exclamation—

"Confound his impudence!"

Then I ran laughing to my own room.

Among the things in the old, worn-eaten, lime-stained trunk which I searched for a costume the day after my twilight talk with grandma, was her wedding dress, and with a cry of delight I had instantly decided to appropriate it.

The white satin folds had turned yellow—a pale yellow, that in my opinion enhanced the beauty of the garment.

To be sure, its trimmings of yellow old lace, and its pretty pipings of satin, were somewhat weak and past very much handling.

But the full, puffed sleeves, the short waist and scant skirt, made me laugh, as I tried it on secretly in my room, and brushed my hair high up, as grandma's portrait was, and sprinkled white powder over its golden-brown sheen.

Such a very becoming costume as it was.

"Oh, yes, indeed,

"I must wear this."

And then, redressing in my own modern costume, I gathered my treasures together and hid them away, until the important night should arrive.

And now it had come.

At nine o'clock Jack would call for me, and I must hurry if I would be ready in time.

The motherly old housekeeper assisted me, and arranged my hair to perfection, after the manner of auld lang syne.

But when the wedding-veil was finally arranged, I clapped my hands as I fairly fell in love with my reflection in the mirror.

"I do look like grandma—I really do!" I said, and then sent for the dear old lady, to come and see her counterpart.

She came, and after a stare of astonishment she sat down and had a quiet little cry.

"It is lovely, darling!

"But oh, my lost and happy youth.

"Never mind, Edie, I am all right now, and I hope you'll have a delightful evening, my pet, as a bride of ancient days."

After she had gone back to her room, I wrapped a light, long cloak over my figure to hide my costume, and knowing that Jack would come presently, ran down to await him in the parlor.

Only one burner of the large chandelier was lighted.

I threw off my cloak, and stood watching the firelight, and waiting for Jack, as my thoughts went striding into the future, and winding themselves about my lover, till I forgot my dress and fancy party, and was only aroused from my dreaming by the sound of a step in the hall.

Turning quickly, with a smile on my lips to greet Jack, whom I supposed it to be, the opening of the door revealed the figure of grandpa, who came slowly into the room.

But I shall never forget the expression of his face, as he suddenly discovered the room not to be empty—surprise, bewilderment, mingled with a yearning love that his eyes could not disguise.

He passed his wrinkled hand over his brow and staggered, while I, fearful that he would fall, hastily advanced towards him.

"Oh, yes, I see!

"It is only little Edie; but, child, I thought at first—you looked like—like her!

"I thought I was mistaken about all the years, and—why, how foolish I am.

"But you are very like her as she was then."

"Like grandma, you mean?" I replied, a sudden thought in my heart—"like her on her wedding-day, grandpa?"

"Yes, yes, child.

"There, don't bother me."

"I came down because, somehow, my room had grown chilly.

"But never mind, I am going back now.

"You are dressed for that silly fancy party, I suppose."

I drew the large lounging-chair to the fire, and coaxingly drew grandpa towards it.

"Sit here a few minutes, grandpa, darling?" I asked, kissing the aged brow, and looking at him with grandma's grey eyes, till he passed his hand over my cheek, and again murmured—

"Ah, very like her!

"She was a bonny bride, child—a bonny bride in those days."

"I've something to show you in a moment," I said.

"Wait here, and I'll bring it."

Then I flew to grandma's room, and invented some excuse to get her down into the parlor; and unsuspectingly she followed me.

The dim eyes at first failed to perceive, in the low light of the room, that somebody else was seated there, and she walked to the fire, while I slipped outside the door and left them alone.

Jack came while I yet waited in the hall, and his look of astonishment, when he recognized my face as the only familiar thing in the figure which turned towards him, changed to one of interest as I explained my effort to bring the dear old people together at last.

And he and I went away together to the party with a hope in our hearts we scarcely dared speak aloud.

Too impatient to learn the result of that silent meeting in the parlor between grandpa and grandma, Jack and I left the scene of mirth, soon after the midnight hour had announced a "Merry Christmas Morn" and drove rapidly home.

A pass key admitted us, and stealthily I crept to the parlor-door and peeped in.

Ah, the happiness of that moment.

Grandpa was still in the arm-chair, but grandma—dear grandma—she was seated close beside him, and the firelight fell warmly upon two clasped hands.

Wrinkled and tremulous they both were, but the gleam of the gold band about grandma's finger was bright as the light in her dear old eyes.

I hugged Jack in my delight, and he hugged me—though after all that was nothing unusual—and then we made a pretence of entering the hall-door, and stepping along the hall, until we finally opened the parlor-door and entered boldly.

My grandparents looked up with the least confusion, and when I knelt before them with happy tears in my eyes, grandpa actually asked—

"Where's that confounded Jack? I want him.

"Why didn't he bring his cane to me himself, instead of acting like a coward, and sending it by you?"

Jack came quickly forward out of the shadow.

"Because I had too much respect for my bones, sir," he laughed.

Grandpa laughed too, and while he and Jack shook hands, grandma drew my face to her bosom and whispered—

"Thank you, dear, for the blessing of happiness and peace restored, through Heaven's mercy.

"My Christmas gift is very precious, and so unexpected that it is doubly valuable."

Here grandpa interrupted—

"Jack, let me show you my Christmas gift from you, sir."

Only a laugh from grandpa this time, and a "Well done, young fellow."

And then the bells from the neighboring steeples rang out gaily the tidings of "Peace, goodwill to men."

When we four finally separated for sleep, Jack's last words to me were—

"There'll be a wedding in the spring, Edie.

"Guess whose."

His Greeting.

BY FLORENCE MEURER.

REMEMBER, fraulein, the children are to have a long holiday.

"For two weeks they are not to look within a book, and as for yourself, you are not even to touch one.

"Our guests come to-day.

"We expect you only to help us entertain, and be entertained in turn.

"You must never forget that we regard you as the eldest daughter of our house and almost as dearly beloved."

So spoke Herr Schobert, sitting one morning at the head of his breakfast-table, to the beautiful girl whose seat was at his right.

Opposite him was the sweet gentle mother of his children—the three little girls who clustered round his chair in eager excitement of anticipation of the delights in store for them.

It was the Christmas season.

In eight short days the happy anniversary would be at hand—eight days were to be spent in merriest fashion by all those assembled under Herr Schobert's most hospitable roof.

The wind might howl without, storm, sleet, or rain descend, naught should banish the sunshine which must reign within; for thus the master had decreed.

"You hear, fraulein," said the elder of the children.

"We are to lock the school-room, and give papa the key.

"Then you cannot go in, even if you want to ever so much."

"You are all too good to me," answered the governess, tears welling in the blue eyes.

"You make me forget that I am a stranger among you.

"Oh, how can I thank you!"

"By letting us see the sadness all chased away from your face," said Madame Schobert tenderly, rising as she spoke, and placing one hand on the girl's shoulder.

"It is too young, too lovely a face to bear anything by smiles."

The children clapped their hands, but the eldest stole to her governess's side, and whispered in her ear—

"And you are not to cry any more, Fraulein.

"Nobody cries at Christmas time."

The girl sighed, even as she kissed her little comforter.

"If it all had been a year ago," she thought wearily, "I would not be thus ungrateful to their kindness by giving it so poor a return.

"One year ago!

"Ah, where is he now?"

"Our friend and daughter, Fraulein Egbert."

So the master of the house introduced her to his guests, and surely, if he ignored that she was but a paid dependent beneath his roof, there was naught left for them but to follow his generous example.

So she was everywhere received with gracious smiles, while her beauty and modest bearing were generally discussed.

There was one late comer upon the scene.

The summons to dinner had been given as he appeared on the threshold of the drawing-room.

Fraulein glanced casually up, but her face became deadly pale, and she put her hand, with a quick motion, as of pain, to her heart.

How came he here to night?

She watched him, while Madame Schobert received him with her most winning smile of welcome, then appointed him to a dark-eyed girl whom he had to lead in to dinner.

Not until they were seated at the table did he recognize her presence.

Then the color forsook his cheek, as it had done hers; but her self-possession had returned.

She met his glance with one of icy coldness, and which said to him, more plainly than though she had spoken—

"We are strangers.

"Do not dare attempt to scale the dividing wall between us."

But she read, in his defiance to her challenge, rebellion to her mandate.

"You will sing for us, fraulein?" whispered Madame Schobert, as they came out from dinner.

"Certainly, madame," she answered, though, even as she spoke, she wondered if the lump in her throat would not baffle all her efforts; but her pride was up in arms and carried her bravely through her song.

The lovely voice had found its way to every heart, and Madame Schobert was openly congratulated upon the treasure she had secured for her children.

All pleaded for another song, and still another.

The girl's voice had a plaintive melody which was inexpressibly fascinating.

"They say the swan sings when it dies," she thought, as they clustered about her with congratulations.

"How many of these people know that mine is the song of a dead heart—nay, a broken heart, that does not die."

"Elsa!"

It was a man's voice which whispered her name close in her ear.

She knew it well—it thrilled through every nerve of her being, but she turned towards him a face marked but with cold disdain.

"Elsa," he repeated, "give me five minutes, I beg of you, for the love that you once bore me."

"Not five seconds!" she replied.

Rising, she took the arm of the gentleman nearest her.

No one has heard the few words interchanged—no one knew the almost tragedy being enacted in their midst, and how glad one of the actors was to fly to her own room and barring and bolting the door, throw herself down upon her couch in passionate despair.

"He dared ask me remember my love for him—my love outraged and openly despised!

"Oh, shame!

"What does he hope to accomplish now?

"A year ago to-night how happy I was.

"Ah, I was rich then, and in my own home the guests gathered to make merry.

"But I thought I was richer than any gold could make me, for I though he loved me—he, who on the morning of my father's failure, sent me back my betrothal ring for my Christmas offering, without one single word which could soften the blow."

Thus memory mingled with her tears, until, dashing them back, she rose and took from her drawer a little box tightly sealed, as she had resealed it one short year before.

Now she tore it open.

A plain gold ring nestled in its bed of cotton, and round it was a slip of paper, with these words—

"My Christmas greeting!"

"Oh, that I could go away!" she sobbed; "that I need not meet him day after day until my strength gives way, and he may see and gloat upon the unhappiness he has made for me."

At the breakfast-table next morning, the sunbeams reflected themselves on no brighter face than that of the beautiful young governess.

Many reproached her for having absented herself so early on the evening previous, but to it all she answered with some gay jest, flashing even an indignant smile in the gloomy countenance of Franz Holstein, as he sat moody and absorbed.

Even Herr and Madame Schobert looked at eachother in pleased surprise.

What should they have done without her, they thought as one by one the days slipped by, until there dawned the morning of Christmas Eve.

Seven long days one roof had sheltered herself and Franz, and all this time no further word had passed between them.

"I hear he is betrothed," she overheard some one say, and again that quick pain darted through her heart.

And yet why so?

She had expected to hear, not of his betrothal, but his marriage to the woman who twelve months ago had stolen his heart and her happiness.

Once beside her plate at breakfast she found a note.

Before her resolution could falter, she reenclosed it, and returned it to him with the seal unbroken.

"I hate him," she said.

But she uttered the words with a sob.

All the house to-day was busy in preparation.

An air of mystery pervaded its every corner, and was visible in every expression.

The fraulein's simple gifts were all prepared, but she was glad that all were busy, that she might be left to her own sad thoughts.

The drawing-room was deserted when she entered it, her arms laden with flowers for its adornment.

Her task completed, she caught sight of her own figure in the mirror, in its deep-black robe, with the background of green and fragrant blossoms.

She seemed a blot upon the picture.

Last year she had been fit companion for both flowers and sunshine.

Now—

The tears would not be repressed.

She hurried from the room, that none might enter to witness her grief.

When at the door some one checked her.

"Elsa, I will speak to you.

"You are weeping; you——"

But the tears had dried upon her cheeks as she dashed aside his detaining grasp, and ran swiftly up the broad stairs.

At nine o'clock the room was to be thrown open which held the Christmas tree—then music and dancing, to follow the distribution of the gifts.

The guests assembled in the drawing-room, awaiting the announcement.

Elsa was on her way down, when the door of Madame Schobert's library opened, and Franz Holstein passed down the hall.

He looked brave and thoughtful, but very resolute.

How handsome he was!

What had he been saying to madame, she wondered, that at this time they should hold such close discussion?

He was not yet among the guests.

Unconsciously she watched for him to enter, but when the folding-doors were thrown open, leading into the long-closed room, and the Christmas tree, in all its splendor, its branches laden with costly gifts, burst upon their view, he still was absent.

One by one the names were called whose owners were to come forward and receive some token of the munificent bounty of Santa Claus.

All but Elsa's; there was nothing for her.

The tears gathered in her eyes.

They had been so kind, so good, yet to-night she was forgotten—to-night she was a stranger and intruder.

But just then Madame Schobert approached and whispered—

"Your gift, dear child, I have left in my boudoir.

"Will you seek it yourself, and accept it, with my dearest love?"

"I will wait to thank you," she answered, with a kiss, and wondering why it had not graced the tree.

She ran quickly upstairs.

The room was but dimly lighted as she entered it and approached the table, expecting to find there the mysterious gift.

But there was nothing.

Just then some one behind her turned up the gas.

It was Franz!

Indignant, she was about to pass him by, when his arm detained her.

"Elsa," he said, "madame sent you here to find your Christmas gift.

"Will you not accept it in me?

"Or, at least, will you not tell to me why one year ago you returned to me without a word all my letters, my gifts, and your betrothal ring, and then disappeared, giving me no clue by which I might possibly find you?

"Why did you keep my last gift if you disdained the rest?"

"Your last gift!" she echoed.

"I might at least retain the ring I had bought with my life's happiness.

"Let me pass, Herr Holstein!"

"Herr Holstein!

"And from your lips!

"Elsa, if I loved you less, my pride would conquer my affection.

"Now by its trampled despised sweetness, and your disdain I command you to speak!

"Of what ring do you speak?

"I sent you no ring, but a bracelet set in pearls."

"You sent me no ring?

"You did not return to me the betrothal ring that I had given you?

"You did not woo the heiress and finding her no heiress turn to her from another?

"Shame on your manhood to prove treacherous even to your treacherous falseness."

Again she strove to pass him, but his hand seized and held her arm.

His face was white as marble, but as firm and unyielding.

"I lost the ring you gave me," he said, in low earnest tones.

"How I never could conceive.

"But I never sent it to you.

"How then did you receive it?"

Then she told him all.

A light dawned on him as she finished.

"Listen, Elsa," he said, "and by my words judge of my truth.

"Last year the day before Christmas I had fallen asleep in my chamber.

"On my table was a little package addressed to you still unsealed.

"It contained a bracelet for your Christmas gift.

"It seemed to me as I awakened that I heard some one flutter from the room.

"It was your false and treacherous friend who wished to steal me from you.

"She had taken the bracelet and replaced it with the ring.

"Innocently I sealed the packet and dispatched it.

"You know that the sudden death of my uncle called me away.

"On my return you had gone.

"I found in my room all that you had sent me, and of yourself I could gain no trace.

"But one thing gave me hope—the bracelet was not with the rest.

"'Ah, she yet loves me,' I thought, 'or she would have sent that too.'

"I know now that you never received it.

"That single drop of comfort is taken from me, but, Elsa, will you not return it with love's full measure of sweetness?"

She listened in bewildered amaze.

In his eyes, his voice, his face, truth shone.

From below came sounds of music and merriment and laughter.

Something of the Christmas joy stole in her heart.

"Franz," she murmured, "you have me all this time?"

"Ah, darling, as I shall love you to all eternity, my once lost, my twice gained Christmas gift.

"Elsa, will you still refuse to come to my heart?

"See, I stand aside.

"Make your choice.

"I will detain you no longer.

"Will you go or stay?"

There is no written record of the answer; but within an hour new zest was given to the festivities below, for all knew that they were celebrating the betrothal of two lovers—Franz Holstein and beautiful Fraulein Elsa.

ECCENTRICITIES OF BEAUTY.

WE are told that the ladies of ancient Leabos slept on roses whose perfume had been artificially heightened.

And in those times court maidens powdered their hair with gold.

Marc Antony's daughter did not change her dress half a dozen times a day, as do the Saratoga graces, but she made the lampreys in her fish-pond wear earrings.

The dresses of Lollia Paulina, the rival of Agrippa, were valued at $2,664,580. This did not include her jewels. She wore at one supper $1,562,500 worth of jewels, and it was a plain citizens' supper.

The luxury of Poppæa, beloved by Nero, was equal to that of Lollia.

The women of the Roman Empire indulged in all sorts of luxuries and excesses, and these were revived by Napoleon the First in France.

Mme. Tallien bathed herself in a wash of strawberries and raspberries, and had herself rubbed down with sponges dipped in milk and perfume.

An Albanian belle of to-day presents a rather striking appearance.

She is, as a rule, coifed with seed pearls and coins, and enveloped in a black serge pelisse.

She uses paint on her face profusely, and her taste runs to cherry lips and cheeks, and jet-black eyebrows strongly drawn.

An Albanian bride discards paint for a while, and, if wealthy, wears a suit something like this: Rose-colored under-robes, with an over-robe of dark-green velvet, the idea being taken from a rosebud half-opened in its leaves.

Thus arrayed, the girl of handsome features is said to look really bewitching.

The Tartars despise prominent nasal appendages, and the woman who has the smallest nose is esteemed the most charming, but to outside barbarians she is a perfect fright.

The women in parts of India wear tunics and trousers of woolen stuff, with large boots, partly of leather, partly of blanket, which come up to the knee and which they are fond of taking off at any time.

In order to get warmth they often put a quantity of flour into these boots beside their legs.

Their taste in regard to ornaments runs much to all sorts of rings, including nose rings.

A typical woman in the Interior of Africa is thus described: "Her naked negro skin was leathery, coarse and wrinkled; her figure was tottering and knock-kneed; her thin hair hung in greasy locks; on her wrists and ankles she had almost an arsenal of metal links of iron, brass and copper, strong enough to bind a prisoner in his cell.

"About her neck were hanging chains of iron, strips of leather, strings of woolen balls, and I hardly know what more lumber."

THE NORTH COCK.—The cock is an important bird. He is historical. A cock assured Themistocles of his victory over Xerxes. Aristophanes tells us that he reigned supreme over Persia before the time of Darius and Megabasus. Numa Pompilius was inspired by a cock, and Romulus was influenced by the same bird in his decision as to the site of Rome. He was sacred to Mars, Apollo, Mercury, and Æsculapius. Mohammed found a cock in the first heaven, so huge a bird that his crest touched the second heaven. The Moslem doctors say that Allah lends a willing ear to him who reads the Koran, to him who prays for pardon, and to the cock, whose chant is divine melody. When this cock ceases to crow the day of judgment will be at hand. The cock on church spires is to remind men not to deny their Lord as Peter did. Peter le Neve says that the cock was the warlike ensign of the Goths, as it is to the present day of the Malays, and that, therefore, it was put up in Gothic churches for ornament.

The crowing of the cock has always exercised an indefinable influence on mankind; it covered the shrinking Peter with shame; it has furnished innumerable poets with stocks of phrases; it has ever become a means for the expression of Parliamentary opinion. In some places, it is true, the cock is regarded with not altogether unmalevolent sentiments. An African tribe complains bitterly that it was all through the cock that they remained black and different from the rest of mankind. The great creating Spirit it is said, set himself during the day time to model the human race. By sundown he had fashioned about 50 different figures out of clay, but they were all more or less brown, and some of them were quite black. He set them up in a row and inspected them before it got quite dark, and then it appeared that they would look better if they were white. So he mixed a great pot of whitewash, and set about daubing them by the light of the moon. But it was troublesome work, and he did not get on very fast. At last, when he had still a score or more to whiten, day dawned and the cock crew, and he came to the conclusion that the rest must remain as they were. And so it has come to pass that some of the races of mankind are red and brown, while the poor negro has remained quite black—and all through a troublesome cock, who would crow when he was not wanted.

Jennie's Fringe.

[illegible]

I'M clean discouraged!" asserted Farmer Ford, coming into the house one cold fall day, and sitting down hard in a chair in the kitchen.

His wife, paring apples at a table, did not ask why.

"I expected we should do well this year, but everything has gone wrong.

"It isn't the year for fruit, yet I thought there would be a few apples, which would have brought a good price in the scarcity; but there isn't a bushel of apples in the whole orchard.

"The potatoes are poor, the corn blighted, and the rains spoiled the wheat.

"If that isn't enough to discourage a man, when foreclosure of the mortgage upon his farm is close at hand, I don't know what is."

Mrs. Ford wiped her eyes.

"Cheer up, father!

"Jennie's coming home."

But even the mention of his only daughter could not dispel the good man's dejection and sense of trial.

He rose up, covered his partially bald head with his old hat, and marched out of the house.

Then good Mrs. Ford wiped away another tear.

Her little financial ventures, too, had been [illegible].

The price for butter was unusually low; the turkeys had gorged themselves on musty wheat, and been found stretched lifeless under their perch.

She had spent all her spare time, all summer, braiding two rugs for the doctor's wife; and the doctor had moved away and left them on her hands.

Such are the trials of farmers' wives; but to have the mortgage foreclosed on the old place where she had lived ever since she was married—the dear [illegible]

[illegible]

the banging down of a trunk, and a graceful girl's form in the doorway.

"Mother! — you dear, darling old [illegible]

"Why, what are you crying for?"

And Jennie Ford's blue eyes opened wide upon the now smiling and delighted wrinkled face.

"[illegible] Jennie, dear.

"[illegible] altered, child! an [illegible]

"[illegible]

"What, child?"

"Fringed, mother dear.

"It never mind my hair

"You have been crying, and I want to know what the matter is.

Jennie, divested of her wraps, with her pretty seal locks burnished in blue silk and lace, was an apparition lovely indeed to appear, tender and blooming, in the old farmhouse kitchen.

A wealthy aunt, peculiar and somewhat unknown, had come to Wheatlands [illegible] previous spring, and, pleased by the [illegible]

[illegible]

A month had been spent at her [illegible] town-house; but finally Jennie had to come home.

"I suppose I was down-hearted, Jennie,

"Father—father's dreadful down about the way things are going.

"The stock and the crop—well, as he says, everything seems to [illegible] this year; and—and the mortgage forecloses the first of January," added Mrs. Ford, her face bending over her again busy hands.

She looked up at last in the silence that followed, and met Jennie's blue eyes, grave enough.

But you needn't fret, child.

"You are young, and I dare say old Wheatlands is a dull enough place to you.

"It's home, mother, and I love my home.

"There is some one coming next week—a gentleman, who has been very polite and kind to me.

"He is rich and elegant, but I am not ashamed of Wheatlands," concluded Jennie decisively, tossing her pretty head, with its line of golden fringe.

Mrs. Ford understood.

"So my girlie has got a sweetheart," she said.

A bright eloquent blushing look from Jennie, but no words, for the kitchen door opened, and, with a glad cry, Jennie sprang into her father's arms.

[illegible] face break into smiles.

"So you have come home at last, dear child."

"I would have come home long ago, dear father," but aunt Elinor wouldn't allow me."

As Jennie sat down by the great open fire-place, her father looked her over from head to foot.

No one noticed the look on his face as he turned away.

Jennie herself was very thoughtful, and sat gazing meditatively into the open blaze, while her mother made the tea and toasted bread on a great pronged fork.

When Jennie kissed her father and mother good night that evening, and silently carried to her pillow the problem of the mortgage's foreclosure, the father and mother sat silent before the red embers of the hearth.

The old man's elbows were upon his knees and his face in his hands.

He uttered a groan.

"As if it wasn't enough to have things going the way they are," he exclaimed, "without having Jennie come home with her [illegible]

"Why father——"

"What sense is there in frizzing and frowselling her hair over her forehead like that?

"It is the most foolish thing in the world.

"I knew Elinor would spoil her—I knew it from the first!"

"I think it looks very pretty, father, but [illegible]

"To think a daughter of mine should ever fringe her hair!" groaned the poor old man, as he rose, set his chair back against the wall, and betook himself disconsolately to bed.

"I wonder if I'd better speak to Jennie about her hair?" mused Mrs. Ford.

[illegible]

[illegible]

A complaint was made to Jennie of her fringe.

She came down the next morning with the same row of little soft curls above her pretty brows, but with a broad gingham apron tied over her neat print wrapper.

She washed the breakfast china, made brown bread and apple-pies, made up the plump feather beds, and prepared dinner as deftly as if she were in total ignorance of the fashion.

Mrs. Ford was satisfied that Jennie was not spoiled.

If Jennie had known of her father's disapproval, it would have been hard for her to abandon that objectionable fringe, for no one else had been especially pleased with it.

Mr. Chester Childreth was very a[illegible] creative of nice effects in the toilet of [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

deprived her of her fringe.

Mr. Chester Childreth [illegible]

[illegible] she loved her home, it was very [illegible] of romance and the refinements of the summer which she had found congenial.

"Hasn't anything done well?" asked Jennie, wiping the tea things with her mother, and referring again to the mortgage.

"Nothing but the quinces, dear Jennie

[illegible]

"Nearly two bushels apiece, and there's [illegible] trees.

"But there isn't much sale for quinces about here.

"I think I'd better put up enough to last two years, and father will get what he can for the rest of them."

Just here Jennie dropped the snowy dish-towel, and had nearly dropped a china tea-cup, but though her cheeks were very red she shut her lips tight, and would not speak a word until she was sure.

She only remarked—

"I wouldn't be in any hurry about doing up the quinces, mother."

A few days later Mr. Chester Childreth arrived.

When they had kissed each other, and read in each other's eyes all the truth of how they loved each other, and the old folks had retired and left them in full [illegible] session of the cozy, comfortable, old-fashioned [illegible] sitting-room, Jennie told him her trou[illegible]

[illegible]

gingerly—

[illegible] right, my dear Jennie.

"Quince seed is, a preparation of which is popular for dressing ladies' hair, are now four dollars a pound, on account of their scarcity.

"I will gladly give your father that price for mine, and would if he had a hundred times as many more.

"Twenty-five pounds will not bring one hundred dollars.

He declared afterwards that he never in his life saw such a happy girl as Jennie was at that moment.

"You see there is only two hundred and fifty dollars needed to clear the debt off," she cried.

"I've part that aunt Elinor gave me for my dress, the coming year.

"Of course, I intended to give father that, but he had only a little laid away, and I have thought——"

[illegible]

pendence of [illegible] much.

[illegible] could hardly wait for morning to [illegible]

his neck, and quickly tell him the whole story.

Mr. Childreth stood by, enjoying the scene, and confirming the truth of her statements.

He told the honest farmer how many counties had been ransacked to supply the demand for quince-seed, and assured the good man that it was not a fairy tale, until he was forced to believe.

Mrs. Ford wept for joy.

"I think, Jennie, that father would have fretted himself into his grave before Christmas Day, if it hadn't been for [illegible]

"My fringe!" laughed Jennie.

"Oh, I overheard him sobbing about it that night—poor father! but Chester liked it, and I really did not think I ought to give it up, for his sake."

A few weeks completed [illegible] plans for closing the mortgage, and Farmer Ford took [illegible]

And it was on Christmas Day that the wedding took place, beneath the beloved old roof.

OPEN SECRETS IN COOKERY.—Both doctors and epicures agree upon rare meat—the former for digestion, the latter for taste, and that all meats and game are the better for slight cooking, with the exception of veal and pork—which they do not recommend at all. It is quite common now for the physician to order a sandwich of beef—that is, a slice of uncooked beef, minced fine, seasoned, and spread between two thin slices of bread, as far more nourishing for weak digestions than cooked meats. It is only the idea, it seems, of rawness that is in the way, and not the taste, as, when it is out of sight most people can learn to like the rarest of beef. The same reason that ordains that the juice must run in the leg of mutton when the knife goes in, and the game must only fly past the kitchen fire, is blind this, and herein is why broiled meats are so delicate and palatable. The outside is so very quickly cooked that the juices within are not affected by the fire. Just what happens to milk when it is boiled, the thickening of the skin on top, and what is seen in a hard-boiled egg, occurs in meats; the albumen, the nourishing quality, is hardened and toughened when meat is too long exposed to heat. So the careful housewife, who puts her meat in the oven early, well salted, and watches it from time to time as all the juices draw out of it with the salt and the heat, until a hard brown round or [illegible] ready to be put on the table, has really [illegible] on the meat almost all its nourishment, and gives the family a mass of dried fibres to chew. It is "done to death." Fish also must be [illegible] into [illegible] un[illegible]

[illegible] gue as to who the pair were who first put on the silken harness, and promised to work kindly in it through thick and thin, up hill and down, and on the level, swim, drown or float. [illegible] than [illegible] money in [illegible] and give a [illegible] opinion why on earth they came to do it. Some marry for love, without a cent in their pockets, nor a friend in the world nor a drop of pedigree. It's desperate, but it is the strength the game. If marrying for love ain't a success, then matrimony is a dead beat. Some marry because they think women will be scarce next year, and love to wonder how the crop holds out. Some marry to get rid of themselves, and discover that the game was one that two could play at, and neither win. Some marry a second time to get even, and find it a gambling game—the more they put down the less they take up. Some marry to be happy, and miss [illegible]

THE FIRST STEP.—It is the first false step that tells. You know that when you tumble down-stairs. Oh, if you only had looked where you set your foot, you never would have had all those blue and [illegible] with the [illegible] by some dead [illegible] who follow any courses that bring [illegible] of shame and suffering and ruin. [illegible] first little step that does all, and it [illegible] not so very bad a step in itself; only [illegible] and girl remember this. Just as it does not do to make a mistake at the head of the stairs, so it will not do to make even a mistake in the beginning of life—especially a mistake of the sort that [illegible] all, for it often brings one to the last.

No error can possibly be more fatal than [illegible] a Christian to suppose that he could [illegible] for the want of heartfelt and efficient [illegible] by magnifi[illegible]

New Publications.

"Winning His Way," by Charles Carleton Coffin, is a holiday book that is certain to be more than a pleasure to the boy who is lucky enough to receive it. It contains a splendid moral, pointed in a most entertaining way, and while it is apt to keep the average youth bent over its pages till late hours, it is certain to fill his heart with the best of sentiments and ideas. To enhance the merit of the narrative, there are some dozen of fine full-page engravings, illustrating particular episodes of the story. Estes & Lauriat, Publishers, Boston. For sale by Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia. Price, $1.25.

[illegible] for [illegible] sheets, the new edition of the Imperial Dictionary, a work which has been accepted in Great Britain for more than a quarter of a century as a standard lexicon of the English language. It contains about 180,000 words, with 3,000 illustrations. The encyclopædic character of this dictionary is said to add very greatly to its usefulness as a book of reference. The work is complete in England, and will be issued here, as it is there, in four volumes of convenient size, each containing 700 to 800 pages. The price will be lower in this country than that in England.

"Picturesque Journeys in America," edited by Rev. I. Bromfield. The design of this book has been, under the cover of an imaginary class or circle of young people led by a tutor, to introduce the reader to some of the most picturesque portions of our country, and bring together general information with regard to the places illustrated. A great variety is, therefore, conveyed in a pleasing and instructive manner, and the editor may be congratulated on the careful way in which he has done his work. The book is profusely illustrated and handsomely bound with illustrated covers. R. Worthington, Publisher, New York. For sale by Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia.

A book that will repay investment is "Uncle Gabe Tucker: or, Reflection, Song and Sentiment in the Quarters," by J. A. Macon. The public has had a taste of its excellence through the medium of the [illegible] but this volume presents the subject in its entire perfection. It is made up of negro sayings, songs, sentiment, etc., as [illegible] from nature, and there is a freshness about it that beggars description. Few books relating to the negro, or anybody else, contain so much that is wise, witty, and [illegible] ing in its pages as this volume. Lippincott & Co., Publishers, Philadelphia. [illegible]

MAGAZINES.

From the appearance [illegible] which is on our desk, we [illegible] that the young Vicks are "out [illegible] block," as the Floral Guide [illegible] parlor table. It is printed on [illegible] paper, has three [illegible] and vegetables, [illegible] not be disappointed. [illegible] [illegible] seeds are [illegible] have [illegible] claim.

[illegible] cared that no [illegible] were [illegible] care which the young of the [illegible] for their old parents, and restr[illegible] when the latter lost their feathers [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

Our Young Folks.

TREES AND PRESENTS.

BY J. H. L.

REMOTE was our country parish from the city.

We were several miles from our post-office, and village market town; and we had more blood than money.

It was rather a bad year in the parish.

A sickly spring had been followed by a wet summer; we were all rather down; when, one long, dripping July day, my sister Agatha said to me, "Molly, I mean to have a Christmas tree for the school children next New Year's day."

"Oh, Agatha, where will the money come from? and we want it for so many things that are really needful!"

"I think that, at our present rate, we shall get down into such depths that it will be needful to pull us up.

"No one in the place but ourselves has ever seen a tree, and it will be a new sensation, and brighten existence for the whole twelve months afterwards.

"The children will be quite content with the presents we can make, and I'm going to talk to the mother about it."

Well, Agatha carried her point, on one condition—that five dollars was to cover her outlay.

Anything beyond was to come out of her own pocket, not a deep one by any means.

Agatha at once expended ten cents in buying a tin money box at the village shop to catch stray pennies.

"Only set it up, and they will be sure to come," she said.

And so they did.

Then she established a "Christmas Tree" box for scraps besides, and into this she put all the bits of colored paper, envelope bands, old pictures, tinsel off calico, bits of ribbon, and indeed words that came in her way.

By the middle of October it was full; so was Agatha's head of her plans, and our brother Tom drew a picture of her with a Christmas tree sprouting out of her brain. But dear old Tom dropped two dollars into her box also—a great gift from him, as he had been "called to the bar," and why was not then apparent from the number of his briefs.

Agatha and all of us set to work in good earnest, and we made pasteboard boxes out of the scraps, and bags, and wonderful purses, etc., and dressed some funny dolls, and plotted our own Christmas cards together to make book markers.

Then we bought little blank books for the boys, sticking pictures or even gay price tickets on the covers; and scrap-books with covers of our colored papers and the pictures, of which until we tried we did not know how many could be got together; with red flannel bags for marbles, and strong bags for treasures.

Eighty-five things to be had to be provided, and by the middle of December we had finished them all.

Then Agatha took one dollar to the town, as two had been spent on dolls, and laid them out on colored tissue paper, wire, sugar plums, oranges, tapers, walnuts, marbles, and a book of Dutch gold.

These last came out of her own pocket, but she would not give up having plenty of good walnuts, and she was obliged also to get four more dolls, as I fear our "tree" had somehow got wind, and four children had of late appeared at the school, whom neither threats nor entreaties had brought there before.

The School Board then was not.

Then came Tom, bringing with him Frederick Harrison, his great friend, the double first-classman and rising barrister.

We were all proud of Frederick Harrison but we rather wished he had not come just now.

However, he too had heard of the tree, and one morning there appeared on the breakfast table a huge snowball, made of wadding wrapped over a foundation of two crossed hoops, with a face worked on it in black wool and with painted red cheeks.

A label addressed to "Miss Agatha Trevor" hung from its mouth.

Agatha no longer thought Frederick Harrison in the way, for it was he who had made up the snowball and filled it with pretty toys from the city.

How did he know she wanted eighty-nine? and how that she longed for crackers?

My father gave us a tree from the plantation; more generously still, he yielded up his study for its display.

Planted in the stable bucket, which was covered with moss, it reached nearly to the ceiling, and we set to work to dress it.

Of course, Frederick Harrison was Agatha's slave, but I left dear old Tom to himself, and he helped me.

First we fixed on the tapers and next our gilt walnuts, then Agatha hung all over the tree the bags, "stockings," and long packets with fringed ends we had cut out of tissue paper and filled with sweets.

Then next came the oranges, and while we were in the middle of these, came a basket with Mr. Pearce's respects for the tree," the most delightful red-cheeked apples in the world!

How all the presents were put up, I have not space to write.

The children came and were given their buns.

Agatha stole away to light the tapers, and then my father and mother headed the procession to the study.

Did ever the expenditure of five dollars in money and a few days in time yield so rich a harvest of delight before?

The old workman who had been taken on the place when we were babies, lifting up his hands, said, "He never expected to see such a sight in his life."

Old Mr. Pearce had read of such things, but never expected to see them—he did not know his own apples!

And a miner who was one of the choir, a huge broad-shouldered man with a voice that almost took the church roof off, held one of the tissue-paper birdcages between his hands as if it were a butterfly that might escape.

We distributed the presents, and sent home the oranges and apples to the grannies and the sick people.

The schoolmaster, who was reading "science," received "Maury's Physical Geography of the Sea," the schoolmistress a work-case that I made for her, and Agatha went to bed a tired but a proud woman. "The tree" is talked of to this day.

Frederick Harrison thought Agatha looked so much better in her old serge, made by our village dressmaker (a queer little woman, whose nose was always twitching like a rabbit's), than other girls of his acquaintance in their tailor-made new ones, and carried away her promise that she would be his wife.

And after her marriage, Agatha wrote to me that Fred had resolved on having a Christmas tree for auld lang syne, and that I must come and help to dress it.

So I went, and great fun we had.

It was rather a different affair from our old one at home.

Fred gave Agatha a cheque for more dollars than she had been allowed shillings before, and told her that must do.

In my eyes the figures were boundless, but Agatha said that she would only have presents for children, as she could not afford them for the elders!

We gave up a day to our shopping, going first to order a tree, and then to a toy shop.

Here we were to get our tapers, our taper sconces, and all the furnishings we wanted.

The sconces had clips at one end to hold the taper, with hooks to bend round the bough of the tree; and at the other end of a long wire was a star, which, when the taper was fixed on the branch, hung down so as to come behind the flame below, and, as the wire was flexible, it could be bent to any position.

We got tapers in plenty; then looked about for fairies, of whom we found enough to people Fairyland, at ten cents a piece.

My heart went to the prettier ones at twenty-five cents, but prudent Agatha bought the larger number of the cheap ones, and got five for a dollar for the top of the tree.

We got some flags also, and little globes of silvered glass, to hang about everywhere.

China dolls, in the most wonderful of silk garments, supplemented the fairies, and would serve for presents also.

"What surprises have you?" was the next question, and we were shown bunches of carrots, onions, potatoes, and every kind of vegetable, all to open, and to be filled with sweets.

But Agatha wisely preferred some made on the same principle like buns, oranges, apples, and lovely peaches, and eggs, which she said she would put into nests made of moss with wire twisted round them, as we had done with the almond comfits on our old Christmas tree.

Some bird crackers were also appropriate and of the large bonbonnieres we had Santa Claus himself, with a Christmas tree in his hand.

One of these on the tree would have been more correct, but Agatha bought four, one to fare each way.

We also found babies whose heads took off, and gilt sabots.

Now for the toys.

A negro fiddler who played when a handle was turned, a regiment of soldiers, packets of harmless Chinese fireworks, knights in armour, tops, penwipers with a cat and kittens, or a little party of toasting mice, and sticks, with mimosy at the top but empty below—made of good stout material to hold those miscellaneous treasures of more value to boys than money—owl lanterns, whose flaming yellow glass eyes looked out from the depths of the shadows, and some bronze knights holding banners, the banners containing a photograph, were for the boys.

For the girls were provided dolls—little china creatures in boxes with trousseau complete—painted satin pincushions with a mirror on one side, Japanese butterflies as big as bats, which flew about the room when they were wound up, and miniature work-baskets.

A great lantern like the head of Father Christmas wound up our dealings here, and then we went on to the East India house close by.

"I only want things that will be effective on a tree," said Agatha, as she invested a few cents in two dozen dolls' Japanese parasols, and in moving Japanese figures at each; not to speak of pictures to ornamental port-folios, and wonderful bone Japanese acrobats, which would never get out of order.

Pretty little cups, boxes, and trays ran away with more of Agatha's money than she calculated upon, and we hastened off to the Perfumery Company's, to get some superior Japanese fitting fans, some pincushions, and some bottles of scent for the older young ladies, who enjoyed a Christmas tree, but disdained toys.

And Agatha bragged Fred, and exhausted her vocabulary of endearing names, when in the evening arrived a box from Fortnum and Mason's, of candied fruits, fruit farcies, chocolate surprises in the shape of locusts and beetles, sticks of sucre de pommes, and American candles.

The tree was a success.

Everything was hung by invisible threads and wires; the parasols were spread over the sparkling fairies, the fruits glowed.

The tree stood in the midst of a green plateau of moss, bordered with ivy, on which lay some of the fruits as if they had fallen from the tree; opposite the door Father Christmas, his brown crowned with ivy, beamed a welcome on us all.

Agatha had arranged everything herself, and the result was a bit of fairyland.

The presents were all numbered, the corresponding numbers being drawn by the children out of a bag.

Some, of course, went wrong, but the rectifying the mistakes and exchanging the presents only added to the fun, and a little maid of five, who had never seen a Christmas tree before, imparted to me that she "felt tipsy with delight."

Agatha's tree, pretty though it was, in point of cost was put into the far distance by one to which I went with her at the house of some millionaire friends of Fred's who invited us all three, though we were not children, to enjoy it.

They were an old gentleman and lady, with no children of their own, but with the touching love for them which the childless so often have.

They had given carte blanche to the French confectioners for bonbons and bonbonnieres, and for sconces, tapers, and toys.

The old lady had designed the arrangement of the room.

The tree stood in front of a pier glass, and the other mirrors in the room were supplemented by the cheval glasses brought down for the occasion.

All the mirrors were wreathed with ivy and holly, and the stands of the cheval glasses were cleverly hidden with moss.

The tree was lighted as Agatha's had been, and there was an abundance of the silvered glass balls, and the pretty glass menu stands besides, which made reflectors while the tapers lasted, and afterwards gladdened Agatha's heart as the gift to the young housekeeper.

Round the foot of the tree extended a wide carpet of moss, edged with ivy, and starred all over with yellow chrysanthemums and Christmas roses, here and there among the moss were quaint fungi like ears and mushrooms, and some of the fruits had apparently fallen on it.

It was like magic.

When we entered the room we seemed to have stepped into an illimitable forest of Christmas trees; they were reflected back and back again from the mirrors.

The room was sparkling with light; here and there glowed a monster Chinese lantern; and at the foot of the tree was the dear old host himself as Santa Claus, needing nothing more than a loose robe and his own white hair and beard to look the part to perfection.

He took down each present, and gave it himself.

A huge gilt box filled with bonbons was given to the big boy of the party, almost grown up, a duke in fact in costume, who contained sweets only to the youngest little girl.

There were Watteau dolls in crimson masques, sedan chairs to carry them, bags, painted guitars, pincushions of trefoil shape in painted satin, bags, oysters in grey satin, golden ships, drums, boxes of blue satin painted with daisies, dolls' chairs covered in blue satin, every one holding its bonbons, and more bonbons than I can describe.

Then the children were bidden to hunt for mushrooms, and they found in each one a surprise, until their delight knew no bounds.

How happy I was too, with the very fan I had longed for, painted in forget-me-nots on white silk, that had been shown Agatha at the perfumery shop as "inexpensive," but was beyond her mark.

And when we returned to the other drawing-room, our hostess showed us the "surprise" that had come for her with the French bonbons, her husband's gift—a blue satin worktable with a tray below, embroidered in roses in high relief, all full now of the "sweets" she was going to send to make a joy in the Children's Hospital.

"And these sweets are for the poor paralyzed children she continued, as she showed us two satin boxes embroidered on the lid, the one with blue cornflowers, among which a fairy was walking and adorning herself with them the while, and the other with poppies, of which a fairy had taken one for her parasol and another for her hat.

"Molly, you should have seen what they had last year," said Fred, as we drove home.

"They had had a ship, made like an old Argosy, with gilt timbers and purple sails, and presents hung on little pegs all over the masts, and among the cordage, and in the hold.

"Two little boys dressed as sailors came to the folding doors, and announced that the Argosy had arrived, and there she was in the room where the tree stood, resting on rocking-gilts, and the children distributed the presents.

"It was even better than this.

***"A coward can be a hero at a distance; presence of danger tests presence of mind." Presence of disease test the value of a curative. Kidney-Wort challenges this test always and everywhere, so far as all complaints of the kidneys and bowels are concerned. It cures all, nor asks any aids.

CHILDREN'S DROLLERIES.

THERE can be no doubt as to the sharpness, or as the insolence of the boy who as he was removing the outer part of a piece of cheese, and was told by his father in a tone of remonstrance that he ate the end, answered, "I am cutting this off for you."

Many of the sayings ascribed to innocent little children are at least as rude as they are witty.

What one can be said of the daring repartee uttered by the boy who when asked first to know whether he was grateful, had been told Noah of the ark, on being answered coolly in the negative, inquired of the old man how it was that he escaped drowning."

There is deep pathos, on the other hand, in the case of a poor boy who, having been presented with a half-dollar, and assured on receipt that it was a good one, expressed a regret saying that if it had been bad he might have kept it, but as it was good his parents would have it from him.

There is drollery sometimes in the naivete with which a child will mistake the character of an action.

A young man, for instance, coming home from a party so late that he thought it desirable to take off his boots before walking upstairs, was told by his infant brother from a commanding position on the staircase that he need not be afraid of waking the family, since they were "all up."

To stories of the "*enfant terrible*" kind there is really no end; for the terrible child is always among us, and never cease saying the wrong thing at the wrong moment.

It was one of Gavarni's own, who, when a visitor showed the child a packet of bonbons and said he should give them to him upon going away, called upon the gentleman to depart at once.

Some of Gavarni's were almost too terrible to be funny.

They let out the most compromising things about their parents.

In English stories of the same type, the terrible child confines himself to identifying a casual acquaintance as the man who kissed his sister on the night of a party.

There was not much in the indiscretion committed by a child who had been warned not to make any personal remarks to a gentleman who had recently lost his arm in battle.

"She obeyed orders implicitly until she went to kiss him; 'Good-night,' she exclaimed; adding, 'I haven't said anything about your poor arm, have I?'"

Heroes do not as a rule resent allusions to wounds honorably gained.

The case may here be mentioned of a boy who in a large assembly caused a general feeling of consternation by claiming a pecuniary reward for exceptional merit just displayed.

He had been cautioned not on any account to laugh during the song of a lady who could not sing without making grimaces, and had been promised ten cents if he succeeded in complying with the injunction given him.

"I want my ten cents, ma," he cried out at the end of a more than usually showy cavatina: "I didn't laugh once."

Some of the best stories of clever sayings by children present, the defect of endowing the little ones with a wit beyond their years.

The explanation, however, is good, whether "a little girl" gave it or not, of "bearing false witness against your neighbor," to the effect that "it was when nobody did nothing and somebody went and told of it."

INDIAN COURTSHIP.—With civilized beings, as we call ourselves, love-making has its difficulties. It is not so with the Choctaw Indians. There is with them no difficulty about even popping the question. The youth whose stammering tongue almost refuses its office in the presence of a woman, stands quite as good a chance as the most fluent orator of the tribe; since, when he proposes to the girl of his heart, he need only watch until he finds her alone, and then, picking up a few pebbles, throw them gently towards her so that they will fall at her feet. If she is inclined to favor the suit thus delicately pressed, she will soon make it manifest by smiles and blushes; if it is distasteful to her she will retire with a glance of scorn at her crestfallen admirer, or utter an imperative, "Go away!"

In the latter case, Choctaw etiquette demands that he shall promptly take the lady at her word, since she is supposed to know her own mind, and it would be considered derogatory to his dignity to persist. We have so many requests for information as to the best mode of proposing, that we offer the Choctaw fashion as a possible solution of the momentous problem. Lovers need not confine themselves to pebbles, thought at a seaside picnic pebbles would do.

At a garden party, flowers would answer, and at the table some delicacy that ladies love—say an extremely large strawberry—gently tossed upon her plate.

ARAMINTA thinks seriously of applying for divorce, on the ground of fraud. She was induced to marry Frederick, she said, principally because everybody said he was a rising young man; but when it comes to getting up to build the kitchen fire these cold mornings, he doesn't rise worth a cent. Hence Araminta's grievance.

☞ Explicit directions for every use are given with the Diamond Dyes. For dyeing Woolen, Cotton, Eggs, Ivory, Hair, etc.

AROUND THE BOARD.

BY A. L. T.

Once more around the board
That marks this festive time,
Let's give in happy chorus
A merry Christmas chime!
And whilst our hearts are glad,
Let voices sweet unite;
To sing this song to Christmas,
And hail him with delight.

Bright be his holly bough
O'er happy homes and hearts,
And sweet the joyous hope
His crystal wreath imparts!
True be the friendship shown
Throughout this fertile land,
Whilst lips give smiles and welcome
With heart and voice and hand!

Let dance and song prevail,
And cheerily abound;
With pleasure time we'll pass
In one continual round.
Yet 'midst our joy we'll think
Of hearts still sad, maybe,
And wish they shared our gladness
And felt our mirth and glee.

So fill a bumper brimming,
As hearts are now with joy!
We'll drink a health to Christmas,
And pledge the jolly boy!
May many merry seasons
Find all from sorrow free!
And may the years before us
For ever happy be!

THE FASHION OF PRESENTS.

THE subject of presents crops up very naturally at this season of the year; for, though restricted to no particular time or event, Christmas-tide, New Year's Day, Easter, birthday anniversaries, christenings, and marriages must ever have an undisputed claim on our liberality. From that most ill-starred day when Eve presumed to bestow what was not hers to give, human nature has ever felt a craving to confer love-tokens and remembrancers.

The fashion of making New Year's presentations obtained amongst the ancient Romans, and these gifts were called strenæ. Offerings to the Roman Emperors were made by all classes, who went in large assemblies to present them; and, in the days of Julius and Augustus Cæsar at least, a handsome acknowledgement was made in return, amounting to double the value received. But Tiberius was as niggardly as he was tyrannical, and he demeaned himself to accept these gifts, but never gave an obolus in return.

Among the most popular of New Year's gifts at one time gloves appear. A gift of the latter was particularly acceptable, and the money given for their purchase, which was then called "pin-money," grew into a term to signify an allowance designed for the purchase of many other necessaries, including all a woman's private expenses.

Very far from agreeable to our prejudices of to-day, money was often substituted for the favorite gift of gloves; and from this circumstance the term "glove money" had its origin. Sometimes they were presented on other occasions than New Year's Day, and not unfrequently filled with money, as "refreshers," to men of the law, and persons who had rendered especial services.

Queen Elizabeth showed a very unmistakable partiality for presents. The humble position of her attendants, or domestic servants—even down to her cooks—did not form any obstacle to her acceptance of whatever their loyalty or interested motives induced them to offer. Boxes of lozenges had attractions, and pots of conserves, presented by her apothecary; and foreign sweetmeats from her own private physician. Her kitchen servitors were not remiss in their attentions; for we read that; at least on one occasion, they contributed of their bounty to her always sumptuous table "a fayre pye oringed," and "a fayre marchpayne."

But not alone was the maiden queen remembered in the humbler style of presentation of modern "Christmas hamper" type; but mantles, doublets, petticoats—gorgeous enough for a queen to wear—and rich gowns, etc. An exact and descriptive inventory was taken of the presents made and received year by year at her court, and amongst them one item, recorded in the year 1561, is a pair of black silk knit stockings, made and presented to her by her "silk woman," Mrs. Montagu. With these her Majesty was so much pleased, that we cannot be surprised to hear she was quite put out of conceit of the "cloth hose" which she had worn up to that date, and declined to wear them any more.

As a specimen of the offerings made in money to the queen, no less than a sum of £200 was presented to her by the Archbishop of York on one occasion; and it is only fair to say that she gave an equal return to her subjects, usually in silver-gilt plate.

There is an entry in the Revenue Records of Henry VI., of New Year's gifts to the value of $800, made to the officers and servants of the court, and to those who had contributed their annual remembrance to the king.

In the time of the Commonwealth, the old custom, as far as regarded the court, was entirely discontinued; but it appears that an exception was made in favor of the chaplains in waiting, for half-crowns used to be placed under their dinner-plates.

To such a lavish extent was the giving of presents carried on in France, that Louis XIV. issued an edict (1704) suppressing the traditions handed down from the Romans. But the order had no effect—was scarcely noticed, in fact.

How much we owe to the Germans for the charming invention of the Christmas tree we need not say.

We do not make as much of these holidays as we ought, nor as we did in "the good old times." It is to be hoped that, for the benefit of trade, as well as for the sake of kindly feeling, gifts of friendship and benevolence will continue an ordinance of these seasons for all time. For, be they costly or only trifles saved out of a hard year's earning, they shadow forth that blest "good will to men," that "kiss of peace," of which the angels sing.

Grains of Gold.

We need not die to go to God.

Jealousy is the apprehension of superiority.

Patience is a necessary ingredient of genius.

The great secret of eloquence is to be in earnest.

A mind once cultivated will not lie fallow for an hour.

Do thy duty; that is best. Leave unto the Lord the rest.

In your feelings towards all around you be indulgent and liberal.

We cry out for a little pain, when we do but smile for a great deal of contentment.

Many evils bring many blessings. Manna drops in the wilderness, corn grows in Canaan.

Good is never more effectually performed than when it is produced by very slow degrees.

It is better to be interested with inferior persons and inferior things than to be indifferent with the best.

Young ladies who fancy that there is anything degrading about housework make a great mistake.

On the spiritual river where we would ever sail, the Sabbath opens into clearer water and broader bay.

Happiness is not what we are to look for. Our place is to be true to the best which we know, to seek that and do that.

In sickness or in health lemonade is a safe drink. It corrects biliousness; it is a specific against worms and skin complaints.

If virtue be valued because it is politic, because in pursuit of it will be found most enjoyment and fewest sufferings, then it is not noble any more.

The parent or the teacher who inflicts penalties as an outlet for his own impatience or displeasure, is utterly incapable of the task he has assumed.

The history of every discovery, of every enterprise of benevolence, of every reform, is the history of toil and watching through long discouragements.

Prayer would be a very dangerous instrument for ignorant, selfish, fallible men to wield, if there were not an infallible One to refuse to grant mistaken requests.

Charity, the most lovely of virtues, represents others as lovely as possible. It does not merely let us see an object as it is; it is a kind of sunshine that brightens what it lets us see.

A few strong instincts and a few plain rules should govern us, and among them one ought, if possible, to cherish an undying love of truth—not abstract truth, but the everyday article.

A man's personality has a powerful, subtle influence on all with whom he comes in contact. It will readily be seen, therefore, how necessary it is for us to cultivate an agreeable personality.

Man must repent, himself. He must love God, himself; he must abandon sin, himself. God will not do the work for us; He will only infuse the spiritual vitality by which it is to be done.

Perhaps there are few less happy than those who are ambitious without industry, who pant for the prize, but will not run the race; who thirst for truth, but are too slothful to draw it up from the well.

Never let your honest convictions be laughed down. You can no more exercise your reason if you live in constant dread of ridicule, than you can enjoy life if you live in constant fear of death.

Be especially careful to talk truthfully in your dealings with children. Don't tell your child you will take his head off if he doesn't shut up, because you won't, and it teaches him to doubt your words.

Men say their principles point to heaven. Why, so does every tree that buds, and every bird that rises as it sings. Men say their aisles are good for worship. So is every mountain, glen, and rough seashore.

Femininities.

One of the sweetest pleasures of a woman is to cause regret.

Ovid says that in his day girls were taught to smile gracefully.

Society is in a pucker on the question: "Shall our girls whistle?"

A flirt's heart is like an omnibus—it always has room for one more.

Who pays the highest price for a home? The woman who marries for one.

Housewife—"Before I employ you, I must ask, "Have you a lover?" Servant—"One? I should smile."

It's the woman who has a brown plush jacket on who can quickest tell a sealskin when she sees it on another woman.

Six women, with babies, met the other day, and agreed to vote which was the handsomest infant. Each child got one vote.

It was a trifling circumstance that clouded the domestic bliss of a recently-married Norfolk couple—she had corns, he hadn't a razor.

The owner of a fur-lined circular considers it great extravagance to keep it buttoned so tight that one end won't blow back and let people see the fur.

There is a woman in Paris who speaks twelve different languages. She must be a happy woman, for she can deliver a curtain lecture in a dozen tongues.

The girls of the country have formed a league not to kiss the cigarette-smoking young man, and he'll have to be contented with hugging and being told he's a darling.

We are told that the ladies of Lesbos slept on roses whose perfume had been artificially heightened. And in those times court maidens powdered their hair with gold.

A woman who thought she had used arsenic instead of baking-powder in her biscuit, solved the question by feeding two tramps. The sensible women are not all dead.

A medical journal has found that there are from 100,000 to 200,000 hairs in a woman's head. The number of hairs in a man's head depends considerably on the length of time he has been married.

A gentleman the other day inquired of a Belvidere lady of his acquaintance what was her age, and the reply was, "Twenty-one." "How long ago was that?" he innocently asked. Then she got mad.

It is estimated that courtships cost on an average three tons of coal each; but any one who has experienced the heavenly joys of courtship will fully agree with us that they are worth all they cost.

Mrs. Livermore is lecturing in the South this winter on "What Shall We Do With Our Boys?" As the baseball season is over, and skating has not begun yet, Mrs. Livermore appears to be in a tight place.

It is a curious fact that though bigamy is an every-day occurrence at Salt Lake City, the grand jury has not been able to return a single indictment for the crime, for want of legal evidence.

Why is it that a young man and young woman will sit for hours and hours together in a parlor without saying a word; and then, when it is time for him to leave, stand an hour talking earnestly on the front stoop?

Why should a woman whistle when she can use the air from her lungs to so much better advantage in asking for a sealskin sacque, and why should she waste time to pucker up her mouth for anything but a kiss.

A reporter learned recently that half a million birds are imported to this country in a single month for the purpose of using their feathers to decorate the hats which, on the heads of women, seem to the unsophisticated eye the chief charm of the costume.

The example set by London, Liverpool and other large cities in giving ladies a place upon school boards, is now being widely followed throughout England, and the present triennial elections promise to result in a considerable accession of lady members.

It is a law among certain tribes of Indians, as the Omahas, Iowas, Otos, and Missouris, that a widow must remain four years without re-marrying. It is unnecessary to state that a woman of those nations is very careful of a husband while she has one.

In the way of small earrings, nothing can be more exquisitely modest, yet costly and lustrous withal, than the balls of gold of finest beaded work, so paved with tiny diamonds that the metal, rich in detail, is quite unseen, excepting by the closest inspection.

Mrs. Wilson, of Oregon, got a divorce from her husband on the ground of infidelity and cruelty, last year. He reformed, and wanted to marry her again. She consented, but he afterward changed his mind. She is now suing him for breach of promise.

A Toronto lady, in a hurry to go to church, took from her dark closet what she thought to be her dolman. She hung the garment over her arm, and did not discover until she had thrown it over the back of the pew in front of her, that she had brought by mistake a pair of her husband's pantaloons.

A man, who had the fortune to lose his wife during a small-pox visitation, did not repine, but, on the contrary, gave utterance to the philosophical remark that even in his sad affliction he had reason to be thankful that it was his wife—instead of her pretty sister—who had been removed.

Lillie Devereux Blake protests against the sex of the proposed Bedloe's Island statue of Liberty. She says that to have Liberty represented as a woman is a mockery. "Where, in this land," she asks, "is woman free?" Why, on Chestnut street, to spend the money the old man works ten hours a day to earn.

News Notes.

Business is large in the English divorce court.

The new French rifle will carry more than two miles.

There is at present 59,000 Pennsylvanians living in Kansas.

There are said to be nearly 2,000,000 cannibals on the globe.

In a lofty double house in Berlin 1,258 persons make their home.

Gen. Barret has set out 60,000 trees on his Minnesota farm this year.

One New York firm handled 350,000 bushels of peanuts last year.

Among the latest freaks in jewelry are imitations of kitchen utensils.

The United States owes $50 for every man, woman and child within its borders.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Florida orange grove gives her $1,500 profit a year.

A Milwaukee congregation have decided after a long debate that church lotteries are very wicked.

A boy under arrest in West Virginia, for incendiarism, curiously enough bears the name of Hotfire.

Ice cream in the form of a horshoe is the latest, and it is supposed to bring good luck because you eat it.

Maine, which does not punish murder by hanging, has had eleven homicides within the past two years.

The women of Cyprus have thrown aside their veils, and are now going to look at any man they choose.

Notwithstanding the boasted "eulchaw" of Boston, it is asserted that 40 per cent of the school-boys of that city smoke.

Henry Clay's carriage, presented to him in 1833, by the citizens of Newark, N. J., is for sale in Louisville. Price, $25.

Waltzing has only lately been introduced at Adrian, Oregon, and a young man broke his leg in his first vigorous attempt.

Among the dainty little things to give gentlemen this season are cigar-cutters in pearl tipped with gold, or wrought gold or tortoise and silver.

The Rev. James Beecher, a half brother of Henry Ward Beecher, has been sent to the New York Homœopathic Asylum for the Insane at Middletown.

The French aristocracy having introduced the minuet and gavotte at their country houses those dances will be enjoyed largely in Paris during the winter.

"La Vie Parisienne," (Life in Paris) a French journal too well known in this country, has been seized on account of immorality. Better late than never.

A Cincinnati paper says the wearing of gloves by gentlemen is not popular in the West. It grates against the generally accepted idea of republican simplicity.

A few days ago a marine painter, sixty years of age, named Yorke, was found living with a very young wife disguised as a boy, on an old canal boat in New York harbor.

A colored woman has been sentenced to sixty-six and two-thirds days in the workhouse of Nashville, Tennessee, for stealing a brick pavement. She used the material to build a chimney on her house.

A Michigan adventurer raised $2,000 by mortgaging a farm which belonged to a man whom he happened to resemble very closely, and whom he personated so well that the money-lender was deceived.

The death is announced from the western coast of Africa of King Omora. He leaves seven hundred wives. Of his ninety-five children seventy-five are still alive. His oldest son has only four hundred wives.

At a recent agricultural exhibition at Ludenburg, Germany, was exhibited a threshing machine which was driven by electricity at the rate of 1,400 revolutions a minute, and which, at the same time, illuminated the enclosure in which it worked.

There is a well in Dr. Wallace's yard in Atlanta, Ga., the waters of which are perfectly calm and undisturbed during dry weather, but when wet weather is imminent the water is in great commotion, and sounds issue therefrom similar to those emitted from a steam-engine when steam is up.

The body of every spider is furnished with four little lumps, pierced with tiny holes, from each of which issues a single thread, and, when a thousand of these from each lump are joined together, they make the silk line of which the spider spins its web, and which we generally call a spider's thread.

A negro boy in Jeffersonville, Ind., who has not been away from home for six weeks, is down with the small-pox, and the attending physicians is accused of expressing the belief that the disease was communicated to him by a mosquito which had stung a small-pox patient in Louisville, Ky., and afterwards bitten the boy.

SOMETIMES A COLD WILL NOT YIELD to ordinary remedies, because of the severe inflammation of the delicate lining of the tubes through which the air we breathe is distributed to the lungs. This condition produces Pain and Soreness, Hoarseness, Coughs, Difficulty of Breathing, Hectic Fever, and a Spitting of Blood, Matter or Phlegm, finally exhausting the strength of the patient, and developing very serious disease. Dr. Jayne's Expectorant seldom fails to remove these symptoms, by relieving the lungs of all obstructing matter, and healing all soreness. Pleurisy, Asthma, and Bronchitis, are likewise cured by this standard remedy, and the reputation it has maintained for so many years, affords the best guaranty of its merit.

"Presenting the Bride" Heard From

Sardis, O., Dec. 1, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Your magnificent premium picture, "Presenting the Bride," at hand, and think it very beautiful. I am greatly pleased with it, and thank you very much for such a beautiful present. I have shown it to quite a number of people, and they all say it is the prettiest and richest premium they have ever had the pleasure of beholding. Will do all that lies in my power to increase your subscription list.

S. A. H.

Richland, Mo., Dec. 2, '82.

Editor Post—Have received my picture, "Presenting the Bride," and was surprised at its marvelous beauty. I am well pleased with it. I have shown it to several of my friends, and all say it is the handsomest and most valuable premium they ever saw.

M. G. H.

Palestine, Tex., Dec. 1, '82.

Editor Post—I received the picture, "Presenting the Bride," in due time, and all who have seen it are delighted with it. You may look for some subscribers from me shortly, as many of my friends expressed a desire to subscribe, and how could they feel otherwise, with such a paper, and such a premium!

M. J. H. L.

Abbeville, S. C., Dec. 2, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—The picture, "Presenting the Bride," has come to hand, and in good condition. I am much pleased with it, indeed. I have shown it to some of my neighbors, and they all unite with me in voting it beautiful. Will send you some subscribers soon.

S. W. C.

Youngstown, N. Y., Dec. 4, '82.

Editor Post—The picture premium, "Presenting the Bride," received. It is beautiful, and I am very much pleased with it. All who have seen the picture think it is just superb. Expect to get you numerous subscribers in a few days.

E. D. E.

Stonewall, I. T., Dec. 1, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Your premium picture, "Presenting the Bride," was duly received, and am more than pleased with it. It is by far the handsomest picture I ever saw.

M. F. C.

Ellisville, Ill., Dec. 2, '82.

Editor Post—Your premium, "Presenting the Bride," is indeed a beautiful gift of art, and cannot fail to please the most fastidious. Many thanks.

E. D.

Lambertville, N. J., Dec. 3, '82.

Editor Post—Your premium, "Presenting the Bride," came to hand all right. I cannot find language to express my thanks to you for the beautiful premium. I have received many premiums, but yours 'eads them all. Will send some subscriptions soon.

L. N. L.

Kill Creek, Kan., Dec. 1, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—Paper and premium received. THE POST is a splendid literary journal. And the picture is very handsome. Am greatly pleased with it. Everyone who has seen the picture considers it grand.

G. W. W.

Evanston, Wyoming, Dec. 1, '82.

Editor Post—"Presenting the Bride" was delivered to me yesterday, and am highly pleased with it. We consider it a gem. Have given it a conspicuous place in our gallery for the inspection of our friends.

J. McC.

Inesuelte, British Col., Nov. 25, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—I received the beautiful picture, "Presenting the Bride," in due time, and am very much pleased with it. It is far ahead of my most sanguine expectations. Shall see what I can do for you in the way of subscribers.

T. B.

Colegrove, Pa., Dec. 1, '82.

Editor Post—I have received premium, "Presenting the Bride." It far surpasses my most sanguine expectations—perfectly lovely! Will get some subscribers for you.

N. G. M.

Nevada, Ill., Dec. 6, '82.

Editor Saturday Evening Post—My beautiful premium Photo-Oleograph, "Presenting the Bride," came duly to hand, and it is even better than you claimed it to be. I will see what I can do for you in the way of new subscribers.

M. J. F.

Hamilton, Ill., Dec. 1, '82.

Editor Post—The premium picture, "Presenting the Bride" received, and I consider it grand. I have shown it to several of my friends, and each and every one of them pronounces it beautiful.

E. D.

Conneaut, Pa., Dec. 7, '82.

Editor Post—I received my premium last night, and think it very beautiful. I will with pleasure aid you in raising your subscription list, and I think I can get a great many subscribers for you.

D. S.

Madison, Ala., Dec. 8, '82.

Editor Post—I received my Photo-Oleograph, "Presenting the Bride," and think it very beautiful. Had it framed and hung up two hours after its arrival. It is admired by everybody.

A. H. L.

Jackson, Mich., Dec. 7, '82.

Editor Post—I received your premium picture yesterday all sound, and am very much pleased with it. It is far ahead of the premiums usually offered by newspapers, and certainly ought to bring you many subscribers. Am quite proud of it.

H. H.

McFall, Mo., Dec. 5, '82.

Editors Post—I received my premium for The Post, for which accept thanks. It is the most beautiful premium I ever saw.

M. E. Z. L.

ALL THE STYLE.

The maiden sits by the castle wall,
In the western sky the sun hangs low,
Beside her the murmuring waters fall,
Above the roses blow.

But tears are in the maiden's eyes,
Her bonny eyes so blue and bright;
And ever and anon she sighs,
And wrings her hands so white.

Oh, maiden fair, with eyes of blue,
Why do you mourn and weep, I pray?
Is it a lover has proved untrue,
And given you dead away?

"Oh, no, not that," she softly said,
And she wiped her pretty eyes the while,
"But my new bonnet's trimmed with red,
And blue is all the style."

—S. T. OLEN.

Humorous.

The last appeal—A shoemaker's strike.

Educated on a sound basis—The drummer.

It is difficult for one man to give another a piece of his mind without destroying the peace of both their minds.

A hackman last summer went into the surf at Long Branch, and encountered a big shark. Their eyes met for a moment, when the shark blushed and swam away.

"Remember this, my son, that it is a pretty true adage that 'ills seldom come singly,' but you can paste it on your eye-glass that ills are pretty sure to come narrierly."

Traveler: "Look here, I say, hanged if there ain't a black hair in this soup!" Irate landlady: "Well, I'm sure I ain't bound to keep a red-headed cook to please you, am I?"

In China a man who makes or sells adulterated food is imprisoned or hanged. In this country it is the man who buys the adulterated fruit who has to suffer. The other fellow acquires five inches of fat on his ribs, and is elected to positions of honor and trust.

"Waiter," he called, after vainly struggling with knife and fork for full ten minutes on an alleged spring chicken, "waiter, bring me a chilled steel wedge and a heavy hammer, for I'm interested now, and am determined to see of what material this thing is made."

KIDNEY-WORT

FOR THE PERMANENT CURE OF CONSTIPATION.

No other disease is so prevalent in this country as Constipation, and no remedy has ever equalled the celebrated Kidney-Wort as a cure. Whatever the cause, however obstinate the case, this remedy will overcome it.

PILES. This distressing complaint is very apt to be complicated with constipation. Kidney-Wort strengthens the weakened parts and quickly cures all kinds of Piles even when physicians and medicines have before failed.

If you have either of these troubles

PRICE $1. USE Druggists Sell!

KIDNEY-WORT

Acts at the Same Time on Kidneys, Liver and Bowels.

DRY GOODS BY MAIL!

OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION IN STOCK TO SELECT FROM.

All bought for cash, and sold at lowest city prices. Dress Goods, Silks, Shawls, Trimmings, Hosiery, Upholstery, Fancy Goods, Ladies' Dresses, Wraps, Underwear, Ties, Laces, Gents' Furnishing Goods, Infants', Boys' and Girls' Outfits, &c.

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Sure Cure for Dyspepsia or Indigestion, Heartburn, Nausea, Sour Stomach, Fetid or Foul Breath, Constipation, Sick Headache, Bilious Vomiting, Vertigo, Loss of Appetite, Flatulence with frequent Belching of Wind, Oppression after Eating, Burning Sensation at the Pit of the Stomach, and all ills which drive many to despair, arising from Dyspepsia or Indigestion.

The action of these Powders is directly upon the food during the process of digestion, absorbing gases, neutralizing acid, and correcting acid secretions, promoting digestion, improving the appetite, and giving tone and vigor to the entire system.

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1339 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa.

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R. R. R.

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THE CHEAPEST AND BEST MEDICINE FOR FAMILY USE IN THE WORLD.

In from one to twenty minutes never fails to relieve PAIN with one thorough application. No matter how violent or excruciating the pain the RHEUMATIC, Bed-ridden, Infirm, Crippled, Nervous, Neuralgic, or prostrated with disease may suffer, RADWAY'S READY RELIEF will afford instant ease.

Inflammation of the Kidneys, Inflammation of the Bladder, Inflammation of the Bowels, Congestion of the Lungs, Sore Throat, Difficult Breathing, Palpitation of the Heart, Hysterics, Croup, Diphtheria, Catarrh, Influenza, Headache, Toothache, Neuralgia, Rheumatism, Chills, Ague Chills, Nervousness, Sleeplessness, Bruises, Coughs, Colds, Sprains, Pains in the Chest, Back or Limbs, are instantly relieved.

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IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS,

FEVER AND AGUE.

There is not a remedial agent in the world that will cure Fever and Ague, and all other Malarious, Bilious, Scarlet, Typhoid, Yellow and other fevers, (aided by RADWAY'S PILLS) so quick as RADWAY'S READY RELIEF.

It will in a few moments, when taken according to directions, cure Cramps, Spasms, Sour Stomach, Heartburn, Sick Headache, Summer Complaints, Diarrhœa, Dysentery, Colic, Wind in the Bowels, and all Internal Pains.

Travelers should always carry a bottle of RADWAY'S READY RELIEF with them. A few drops in water will prevent sickness or pains from change of water. It is better than French brandy or bitters as a stimulant.

THE TRUE RELIEF.

RADWAY'S READY RELIEF is the only remedial agent in vogue that will instantly stop pain.

Fifty Cents per Bottle.

DR. RADWAY'S SARSAPARILLIAN RESOLVENT.

The Great Blood Purifier.

FOR THE CURE OF CHRONIC DISEASE.

SCROFULA OR SYPHILITIC, HEREDITARY OR CONTAGIOUS,

WHETHER SEATED IN THE

Lungs, Stomach, Skin, Bones, Flesh or Nerves,

CORRUPTING THE SOLIDS AND VITIATING THE FLUIDS.

Chronic Rheumatism, Scrofula, Glandular Swellings, Hacking Dry Coughs, Cancerous Affections, Syphilitic Complaints, Bleeding of the Lungs, Dyspepsia, Water Brash, Tic Doloreux, White Swellings, Tumors, Ulcers, Skin and Hip Diseases, Mercurial Diseases, Female Complaints, Gout, Dropsy, Salt Rheum, Bronchitis, Consumption.

Liver Complaints, Etc.,

Not only does the Sarsaparillian Resolvent excel all remedial agents in the cure of Chronic Scrofulous, Constitutional and Skin Diseases, but it is the only positive cure for

Kidney and Bladder Complaints

Urinary and Womb Diseases, Gravel, Diabetes, Dropsy, Stoppage of Water, Incontinence of Urine, Bright's Disease, Albuminuria, and in all cases where there are brick-dust deposits, or the water is thick, cloudy or mixed with substances like the white of an egg, or threads like white silk, or there is a morbid, dark, bilious appearance and white bone-dust deposits, and where there is a pricking, burning sensation when passing water, and pain in the small of the back and along the loins. Sold by druggists.

One bottle contains more of the active principles of medicines than any other preparation. Taken in Teaspoonful Doses, while others require five or six times as much. One Dollar Per Bottle.

RADWAY'S REGULATING PILLS,

Perfect Purgative, Soothing Aperient. Act Without Pain, Always Reliable, and Natural in Their Operations.

A VEGETABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR CALOMEL.

Perfectly Tasteless, elegantly coated with sweet gum, purge, regulate, purify, cleanse, and strengthen. RADWAY'S PILLS for the cure of all disorders of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels, Kidneys, Bladder, Nervous Diseases, Headache, Constipation, Costiveness, Indigestion, Dyspepsia, Biliousness, Fever, Inflammation of the Bowels, Piles, and all derangements of the Internal Viscera. Purely vegetable, containing no mercury, minerals or deleterious drugs.

Observe the following symptoms resulting from Diseases of the Digestive Organs: Constipation, Inward Piles, Fulness of the Blood in the Head, Acidity of the Stomach, Nausea, Heartburn, Disgust of Food, Fulness or Weight in the Stomach, Sour Eructations, Sinking or Fluttering at the Heart, Choking or Suffocating Sensations when in a lying posture, Dimness of Vision, Dots or Webs before the Sight, Fever and Dull Pain in the Head, Deficiency of Perspiration, Yellowness of the Skin and Eyes, Pain in the Side, Chest, Limbs, and Sudden Flushes of Heat, Burning in the Flesh.

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of souring, undigested food, a torpid or inactive state of the bowels, and a diseased liver, are the causes of almost all the ills of humanity, both mental and physical.

They bring the general system to a condition that makes it easy to contract malarial or typhoid fever. They lead to disease of the bladder and kidneys. They are the forerunners of Consumption, and from their weakening effects on the vital forces they are, in many cases, the primary cause of insanity.

The occasional use of Dr. Schenck's Mandrake Pills will stimulate the liver to healthy action, cleanse the stomach and bowels, give tone to the nervous system, and bring back good digestion, without which the blood cannot be pure. If you have never taken them you can hardly imagine the freshness and vigor they impart to both mind and body.

Dr. Schenck's Mandrake Pills are sold by all Druggists at 25 cents per box, [illegible] mail, post-paid, on receipt of price. Dr. Schenck's Book on Consumption, Liver Complaint and Dyspepsia, is sent free to all. Address Dr. J. H. Schenck & Son, Philadelphia, Pa.

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Always "hard pressed"—Bricks.

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When does a man look like a cannon-ball? When he looks round.

"I aim to tell the truth." "Yes," interrupted an acquaintance, "and you are probably the worst shot in America."

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"Married but six weeks, and in tears!" exclaimed a friend to a weeping bride. "Yes; the first cruel shadow has fallen athwart our pathway. It is settled at last: either I must give up eating taffy, or George must cut off his moustache."

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PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 3, 1883.

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Dear Sir,—Fires are having originated between seven and eight o'clock, under floor of the dining-room of the premises 1027 Vine street, I called into service the Fire Department of the American District Telegraph Company. The alarm was answered with great promptness, and the fire was soon extinguished.

I desire to return my sincere thanks to your company for the admirable efficiency of the service rendered, and especially to call attention to the excellent management and courtesy of your officers, Amburger and Hess, who deserve great commendation.

I am, respectfully yours,

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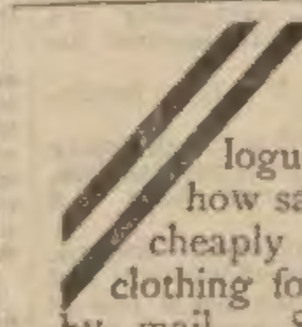

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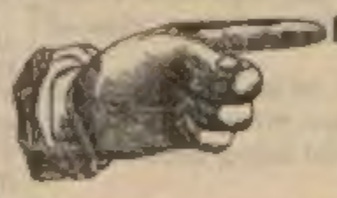

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CHOICE SONGS & BALLADS, WORDS and MUSIC Complete, ONE HUNDRED FOR ONLY 17 Cts.

Angels are watching above.
Black-eyed Bessie's gone to rest.
Bride bells.
Bring the absent back to me.
Come and meet me Rosa darlin'.
Dar de ole serpent was a crawlin'.
Darling Daisy o' Dundee.
Darling I'll come back to thee.
Dars one mo' ribber for to cross.
De beacon lamp am burnin'.
The drunkard's dream.
I cannot say good-bye.
In the gloaming.
Is there no kiss for me to-night?
It is home where mother dwells.
Jessie, are you coming?
Meet me darling by the mill.
My bonnie Jennie Lee.
Over the garden wall.
Patter of the shingle.
The lassie tha' lo'es me so.

And 79 other Choice Songs, all for 17 cts. post-paid. PATTEN PUB. Co. 47 Barclay St., N. Y.

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The six valuable and useful articles illustrated above may be obtained by every reader of this publication absolutely **Free of Charge.** *Read this advertisement carefully, for it presents an opportunity such as is seldom met with.* We publish a splendid Literary, Agricultural and Household paper called **The Rural Home Journal,** each number of which contains eight large pages, 32 columns, profusely illustrated, and filled with valuable hints and suggestions for the Farmer, Gardener and Home with, also splendid Stories, Sketches and Poems, useful Knowledge, Ladies' Fancy Work, Wit and Humor, Enjoyment of Numbers, Reading for the Young, News, etc. It is replete with valuable information, and subscribers often find in a single issue some hint or suggestion worth twice the cost of a year's subscription. Wishing to introduce this splendid paper into thousands of homes where it is not already known, we now make the following unparalleled offer: Upon receipt of only **Fifty Cents** in postage stamps we will send **The Rural Home Journal** for **One Year,** and we will also send Free and post-paid **Six Valuable and Useful Premiums,** as follows: 1. **Scrap Picture Album,** containing 16 beautiful embossed pictures in many colors and various designs, very desirable for decorating fancy articles, for scrap books, etc. 2. **Ladies' Love Tie,** Mother love, and of very pretty design; will be sure to please the ladies. 3. **Adjustable Watch Key.** This is a key that will wind any watch, as it adjusts itself to fit any pendant. It is handsomely finished, and is a most useful and handy article for any one. 4. **Elegant Carnelian Finger Ring,** for lady or gentleman, with gold-plated top and wash-plate. This is a pretty ring, and one that will last a lifetime. 5. **Beautiful Ladies' Jet Brooch,** of handsome pattern, neat and stylish, and will last a lifetime. 6. **The Mystic Oracle,** or Combination Cards, by the aid of which you can tell any number or numbers thought of by members of a company, tell the ages of your friends, etc. These articles are all valuable and useful, warranted as represented, and very suitable for Christmas presents. Remember, we send all the premiums described above, six in number, free to any one sending fifty cents for a year's subscription to THE RURAL HOME JOURNAL. This is a wonderful bargain! Do not fail to take advantage of it, as you may never again have an opportunity to obtain so much for so little money! Perfect satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded! As to our reliability, we refer to the publisher of any newspaper in New York. For $1.00 we will send five subscriptions to the paper and five sets of the premiums; therefore by getting four of your neighbors to send with you, you will secure your own paper and premiums free. Address,

F. M. LUPTON, Publisher, 27 Park Place, New York.

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DAVID LANDRETH & SONS, 21 and 23 S. Sixth St., Phila., Pa.

AUTOMATIC ORGANS, ONLY $5.00. Circulars free. Martuch Organina Co., Philada., Pa.

BRANSON KNITTER

PRICE, $25.00.

For Manufacturing or Family use, is now known throughout America and Europe as the simplest and best Knitting Machine ever made. Makes seamless hose, double heel and toe. Runs either by hand or power. Capacity, from 6 to 8 dozen pairs socks per day. A child can use them. For circulars address JAMES L. BRANSON, 509 Chestnut St., Phila., Pa.

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When I say cure I do not mean merely to stop them for a time and then have them return again, I mean a radical cure. I have made the disease of FITS, EPILEPSY or FALLING SICKNESS a life-long study. I warrant my remedy to cure the worst cases. Because others have failed is no reason for not now receiving a cure. Send at once for a treatise and a Free Bottle of my Infallible remedy. Give Express and Post Office. It costs you nothing for a trial, and I will cure you. Address Dr. H. G. ROOT, 183 Pearl St., New York.

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LOVE COURTSHIP and MARRIAGE. Wonderful secrets, revelations and discoveries for married or single, securing health, wealth and happiness to all. This handsome book of 128 pages mailed for 10c. by The Union Publishing Co., Newark, N. J.

YOUR NAME CARDS Is Elegant Script Type, on 50 beautiful imported enamel cards, 10c. 14 pks. $1. 40 pearl bevel gilt edged cards with fringed corners, 10c. Agents' large album containing all the latest styles of imported bevel edge and satin fringe cards, with illustrated premium list & private terms to agents, 25c. CARD MILLS, Northford, Conn.

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Ladies' Department.

FASHION CHAT.

THERE is surely nothing more accommodating than the human character, for with what complaisance do we give way to enthusiasm, first for one thing and then for another, entirely forgetting our admiration of yesterday in favor of some fresh delight to-day.

It was in 1839 that Mdme. de Girardin said, "Caprice has taken possession of ladies' dress, and has imbued it with a perfume of coquetry.

It is really interesting from time to time to cast a glance back at the chronicles of past years, if only to convince ourselves of our changing habits.

To-day these affirmations would, one after the other, have to be reversed in giving a faithful account of the actual fashions.

Thus, then, we are always changing, and we admire or seem to admire, and, in all good faith, too, everything, or nearly so, that fashion imposes.

At the present time it is braiding for all woolen dresses.

We might seek in vain, in fact, for any other trimming than that just now. All woolen costumes, whether cloth, cheviot, or cashmere, are covered with arabesques of all kinds, unless they are made without ornamentation of any kind.

Ribbon velvets, however, must be noted as an exception; but as rain injures velvet, most people wisely fall back on braiding, which can defy the elements, and is also extremely effective.

All the large establishments have counters laden with embroidered stuffs, the different parts of the costume being traced out ready for making up.

Time is thus saved to the costumiere. The skirt, which is round and plain, has no other ornament than an embroidered band at the bottom, from under which falls the little satin or woolen kilting.

The tunic is draped in the single tablier form, and small draped puff at the back. Then comes the jaquette of whatever shape the wearer prefers, embroidered en plastron and continuing round the basque, the same sort of trimming ornamenting the lower part of the sleeve.

Another pattern, still more elegant, consists of a skirt embroidered en tablier, with a flounce or ruche at the edge, over which comes a redingote, opening down the front to show the worked tablier.

This redingote is embroidered en chale, and the garland that ornaments the front lappets is repeated down the back seams.

Velvet of all kinds is worn, the plain and broche velvets vieing in favor, but the plain velvets clearly lead the fashion.

Ottoman velours is a rich velvety corded satin, a superb material of endless wear.

Broche schuddas and Indian damasks are also original and pretty.

Then there are the vigognes of all shades, flowered in Persian designs, of every imaginable color in tiny patterns, or Indian and Persian spots, which brighten up the dark groundwork of the material.

The leading kind of woolen fabric is the Angora cloth.

The name will naturally indicate the texture, which is a very soft wool, having long downy hairs like the fur of an Angora cat.

In point of corsage there will be four patterns in about equal favor during the winter.

First the jaquette, with its multifarious forms, that is to say, braided or not braided out in tabs, or made plain: then there is the series of puffed corsages, so becoming to slender figures, that are improved by a little extra fulness.

This kind of corsage is cut with only three seams.

It is drawn into the waist by a band, and the pleats being left free from below the band, form a full postillion basque.

Another modification of the same bodice is that called the Ingenue, with the cross-cut shoulder pieces, into which is gathered the lower part of the corsage.

This is also drawn into the waist by a band.

We can safely recommend these two patterns as being both practical and becoming.

Another type, and this is more for robes of ceremony, is the pointed corsage, pointed sometimes in front and at the back, and at others only in the front, with the little pleated postillion at the back.

It should be trimmed with a band of lace, or old embroidery, placed on the corsage in a fichu shape.

The robes Montespan an La Valliere, will be the most worn as the winter goes on: with the tablier of rich broche tissu, or beaded material, or again the lace covered tablier, and the corsage either of velvet, or some equally rich fabric, going in a sharp point over the tablier; the half train of the dress matching the bodice in point of material always.

As to ancient embroideries and old lace, both handsome and costly, they will be used, so to speak, on everything, and have a very grande dame appearance.

Failing the coat of arms, ladies will wear laces, Venetian point and point de Genes, on a foundation sparkling either with azure or rubies.

Everything in fact, in the curiosity way, everything, that is to say, that has age and a history, will be ardently sought after by our elegantes.

The wonderful old robes that our grandmothers bequeathed to us, will be brought to light again, together with fans of all countries and all epochs that are looked upon as curiosities; and also ancient jewelry, in the way of clasps, necklets, and crosses, of the rarest types.

Cashmere costumes are in great request, as this material and cloth are especially adapted to be braided in the present rich, fanciful style.

Plain crenelated skirts offer a good opportunity for rich patterns; the crenelations are cut very long, as in the following model, of light seal-brown cashmere, the deep crenelations of the plain cashmere skirt being braided all up with palm-like devices, and divided by satin fan-pleatings of the same color.

A loosely-pleated scarf is draped at the back, and forms the graceful pleated puff: the cashmere corsage is braided up the fronts like a plastron, and also round the basques, the back having two pleated braided tails.

The straight upright collar is braided, and also the edge of the tight sleeves, a kind of fine black military braid being used for the embroidery.

A seal-brown beaver hat, trimmed with two American paroquets, completes the costume.

Woolen materials, even cashmere, are all worn at will either with a corsage to match or one of cloth, and if the cloth be well chosen in color the same corsage does for several dresses.

This corsage should not resemble the jacket-corsage, which does duty also for a confection, but is a corsage with points back and front, either with added basques, crenelated or plain, or more often accompanied by scarf panters tied behind.

The redingote, more costly, more elegant, of black or seal-brown plush or gros grain, especially brown, does the same duty with silk dresses, being worn over all skirts of any silk material—surah, satin, faille, taffetas, etc.—or lace of any color.

They look very elegant over chequered failles, surahs, or foulards, and make becoming reception dresses.

Redingotes are also frequently made in velvet and velveteen, precisely in the same manner as plush.

The following toilette gives a very elegant model for a velveteen or velvet redingote.

The skirt is covered with flounces of sea-green satin; the redingote is open in front and behind, and made of myrtle-green velvet the front edge richly embroidered with passementerie of shaded-green leaves outlined in gold.

This redingote is laced up at the back, a new feature in such a corsage.

On the hips are draped, over the redingote, scarf panters of pompadour satin with a sea-green background.

Passementerie like that on the skirt forms a handsome plastron in front with a long Valois point, the long, tight-fitting sleeves having passementerie parements.

If preferred, according to the present mode, the parements might be omitted, the sleeves entering the long Suede gloves.

The place given to cords in walking and visiting dresses is occupied with equal prominence by ribbons in evening toilette, some being entirely trimmed with ribbons in loops close together, forming a kind of wreath or ruche round the skirt, or placed alternately with flounces of pleated or frilled lace, and thus serving instead of bouillonnes, this last method being extremely pretty.

Fireside Chat.

SEASONABLE CHARITY.

IT is always difficult to realize the wants of a class other than our own; but it helps us sometimes if we look into our lives and see what, among our surroundings afford us most temporal comfort and satisfaction.

Warmth, good food, suitable clothes, flowers, books, and kindly affection, stand out prominently among our good things, and we do well to try and pass these on to others.

Coals and fuel to the very poor are most acceptable gifts; a good Christmas dinner for the healthy, and some well-cooked appetising morsel for the ailing, a little extra clothing, a few sweet flowers, what rays of hope and happiness they scatter!

> Are there no beggars at your gates;
> Nor any poor about your lands?

are questions which may be profitably applied by others than Lady Vere de Vere.

We have all some "neighbor" in the broad scriptural sense, to whom help would be acceptable, even if we are living in towns and are unacquainted with the poor of the place.

Our servants and other people we employ have many poverty-stricken connections as a rule; and there would be fewer cries for good servants who attach themselves to their places, if we encouraged our dependents to let us know more of their relations, their circumstances and wants, their hopes and sorrows.

With so many to help and no much to be done the only comfort is, there are so many to do it if they will only turn their hand to the work.

For the very poor I find the simpler gifts are best, and that almost everything we throw aside can be turned to account for their benefit.

Underclothing, new and old, is invaluable.

Some of my readers will have a difficulty in believing, but it is true, nevertheless, that some of the very poorest have not even a change of linen.

One of the many ministering women, whose life is a constant sacrifice of self and work for others, assured me that at one of refuges she attends, many a mother seeks a night's shelter, wearing nothing but a waterproof cloak closely buttoned from neck to heel—a baby, with no vestige of clothing on, hidden beneath its folds.

For all such institutions as these, the oldest rags are of use; but mended rags are twice as valuable.

I would say to young ladies at home with abundant leisure though little money at their disposal not to despair on that account, but to lay an embargo on all their own and their relatives' old clothes, remodelling those that are helplessly old, and patching the rest.

Men's cloth clothes especially, however ragged, will generally turn out capital boys' habiliments with skilful contrivance.

Rugs made of rag or list are comfort also: but then list and all morsels of flannel make so many things.

I have just seen little petticoats of list on an unbleached calico foundation, a row of bright braid at every joint; waistcoats on the same plan, and children's bodices, the latter made more ornamental by plaiting the list and laying it down the centre of the bodice.

Long outside pockets for old women are much appreciated, and flannel hoods.

The foundation for the latter should be 16in. long, forming a point at each ear, and be slightly rounded at the back, and pointed in front.

At the back it is plaited into a rounded curtain 17in. long and 3in. deep, bordered with a kilting of the flannel notched at the edge with the scissors, the same over the face, and finished with strings to tie under the chin.

These are not only warm, but are useful for old women and school children.

So many of the charitable institutions of the metropolis appeal peculiarly to women.

I wish any word painting of mine could bring before my readers the pitiful sights to be seen at creches and children's hospitals in large cities.

For such little sufferers the gifts of toys, old pictures, books, red jackets, nightingale wrappers, reins made of braid by which to raise themselves in bed, are most valuable.

Chaplains, patients, and doctors often set what almost seems a fictitious value on bright prints, flowers, etc.

Old pictures from illustrated periodicals, mounted on cardboard covered with red paper, the margin of the print edged with ordinary gold wall paper, would be accepted with grateful thanks, and those who are clever with the brush might devote a portion of their talents to God's service through the poor.

Have you ever visited an incurable hospital?

If not, and any of you are bemoaning that life has yet furnished no special mission, go and learn how patiently, yea, how thankfully, hopeless suffering may be borne, and what trifles you may contribute to soothe and soften it.

Many of the invalids are in a higher grade of life than what we are pleased to call the poor, though they are often the poorest in the saddest sense, poor with wants and aspirations which poverty forbids.

A drawing, a photograph in a pretty frame, a cheap but artistic vase, a light shawl; a bed pocket made of muslin over colored calico and cardboard, with receptacles for handkerchiefs, book, scent bottle, etc., all these would be prized, but more than all personal visits and sympathy.

One of the presiding doctors of a large establishment of the kind told me that he greatly encouraged the visits of ladies, and that many came daily; and that, moreover, much of the work done by the patients, for an annual sale on the premises, had been taught, and materials provided, by the visitors.

M. S.

Correspondence.

A. S., (Oneida, N. Y.)—As you have a good character, and are capable of fulfilling the duties required by the advertiser, there is no reason why you should not apply for the situation.

SIMON S., (Lincoln, Me.)—"Voir de dessous des cartes" is a French phrase, the literal translation of which is, "To see the under side of the cards." In other words, to be in the secret.

READER, (Rowan, N. Y.)—All-Hallows Eve is on November 1, and was instituted by Pope Gregory I., in 835. It is for the commemoration of all those saints and martyrs in whose honor no particular day has been assigned.

E. B., (Monroe, Mich.)—Why should you seek the aid of any agency or society to put your literary wares before the public? If your productions have any real merit, there are not a few editors of magazines who will be glad to purchase. Your proper course is to communicate with them, not through "middle-men."

A. E., (Bristol, Mass.)—1. Square measure is surface measure, and has only length, breadth, and depth. 2. One square yard and one yard square are the same. Beyond that there is a difference. For instance, a surface six feet wide would contain two square yards, but two yards square means a surface, each of the four sides of which is two yards long, and containing four square yards.

N. O. F., (Philadelphia, Pa.)—It would not be a breach of etiquette for you to attend the reception. It is proper for you to both do so, and it is the very height of courtesy on their part to invite you to the wedding, showing that they wish to begin an acquaintance. But it would be very rude of you to call on the bride, and not on the lady who asks you to the reception. She is the person to be treated with the greatest politeness.

BABY, (Arundel, Md.)—We fear that, however painful the effort may be, you have no alternative, for both your sakes, but to cease the correspondence with your lover. The difference between you present an almost insuperable bar to your union, and if through a marriage with you his father was to fulfil his threat, your position would be terrible indeed, and utterly destructive of happiness or comfort. We wish we could advise you otherwise.

PRODIGAL, (Marian, Fla.)—Persevere in the resolution you have formed, and think of the words of St. Luke—"that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." And as you return to the home that sheltered your childhood, think also of another verse from the same chapter, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son.'" Your reformation, if truly genuine, will be hailed with heartfelt pleasure by your family.

KATHERINE M., (Hickman, Ky.)—We have carefully read your letter through, and are much pained at the sentiments you have written. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land," is a commandment that we should advise you to lay seriously to your heart. Your complaint against your parents, when sifted, only shows how affectionate and painstaking they are for your future welfare. In forbidding you the company of one whom you yourself admit is "rather wild and fond of gay company," they are only fulfilling the duty imposed upon them as parents. Take no heed of the advice of others. Rely upon it that the words of your parents are "words of wisdom and pearls of great price" against which, if you possess a true heart, "the counsels of the wicked shall not prevail."

EMMA, (Middlesex, N. J.)—Considering the state of your feelings towards the young gentleman, your position is a difficult one to advise on. If the son is entirely dependent on the father for his income, or is connected with him in business matters, your acceptance of the offer would probably cause a great deal of unhappiness. If, on the contrary, he is entirely independent of him, it would be an easy matter for you both to reside far enough apart to be out of the influence of his temper. There is another thing to be thought of before your decision is taken, and that is, what effect such a marriage might have have on his treatment of your mother? You do not say whether he is aware of the affection existing between you and his son. Whatever course you may take, by all means endeavor to obtain his consent. Bad as his temper may be, he has surely some reasonable periods, which may be taken advantage of for the purpose.

M. F., (Philadelphia, Pa.)—The varieties of stammering are very great; scarcely two are found to be precisely alike. Yet we have no doubt that the difficulty under which you are laboring, and indeed almost every case, is perfectly curable, as it seldom arises from organic defect. By close attention you will discover that comparatively few persons have perfect command over the vocal organs, while the sound of l and r is often found defective. Words beginning k, t, g, d, p, b, m, usually give the most trouble. The means proposed as a cure have been in some cases little better than the disease, such as speaking with the teeth closed, or with the tongue pressed to the roof of the mouth, whistling between words, taking long breaths, beating time to the utterance, stamping the foot, pebbles in the mouth, or tubes fixed between the organs, bands compressing the larynx, and many other practices. But the removal of this defect depends on the skilful application of scientific principles relating to the cultivation of a habit of correct speaking.

KENT, (Madison, N. Y.)—As you have every reason to believe the young lady reciprocates your love, and, during the year in which you have been her only regular visitor, her parents have uniformly welcomed and treated you kindly, even though you are known to be poor, while hers is a home of wealth and luxury, the one honorable course open to you or any other young man who desires to pay his addresses to a young lady is to inform her father of the fact, and ask his permission before making a proposal of marriage to the daughter. Acknowledging the right of the parents to be consulted in regard to a matter of so much importance to the happiness of their daughter and themselves as her choice of a husband, they will be much more likely to favor your suit than if you act independently of their approval, whereas, if you succeed in obtaining their sympathy and a welcome into the home circle, it will more than repay the effort required, independently of the increased respect and dignity resulting from a duty rightly performed and consideration shown which never fails to be appreciated.